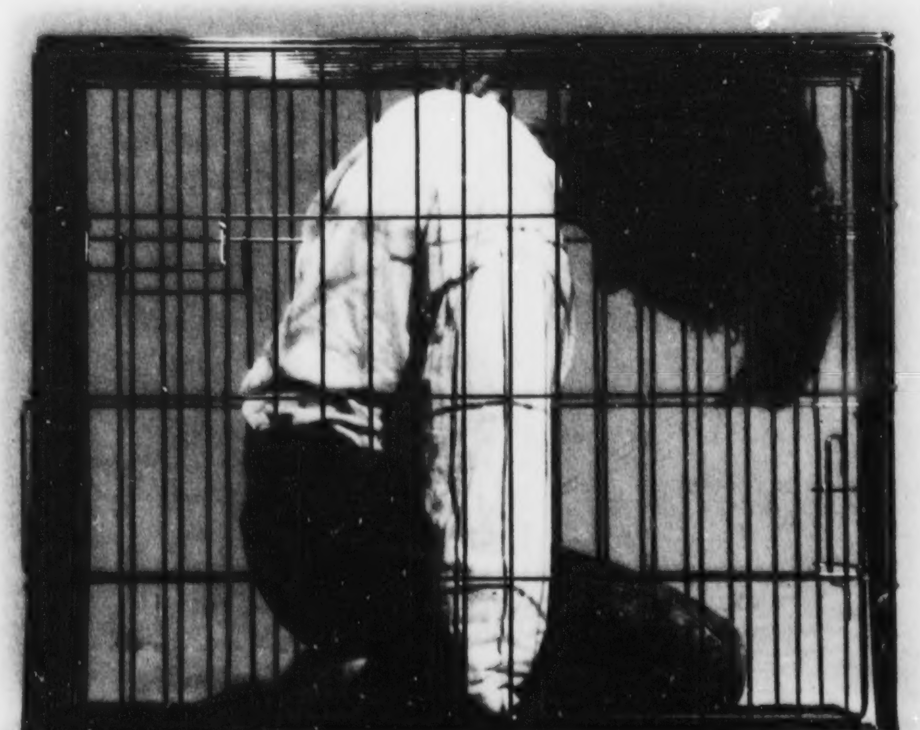
Stephen King and Barbara Kruger, the art of Ferrari, Ron Martin in color

CANADIAN ART

THE HIGH-RISK ART OF JANA STERBAK



PLUS
The garden path: a photo portfolio, an anatomical guide to chairs, Rodin's collaboration with Camille Claudel, art in the audio-visual age, Gerald Ferguson, William Burroughs, Geneviève Cadieux, Frank Gehry, Jack and Doris Shadbolt, Medrie MacPhee and much more

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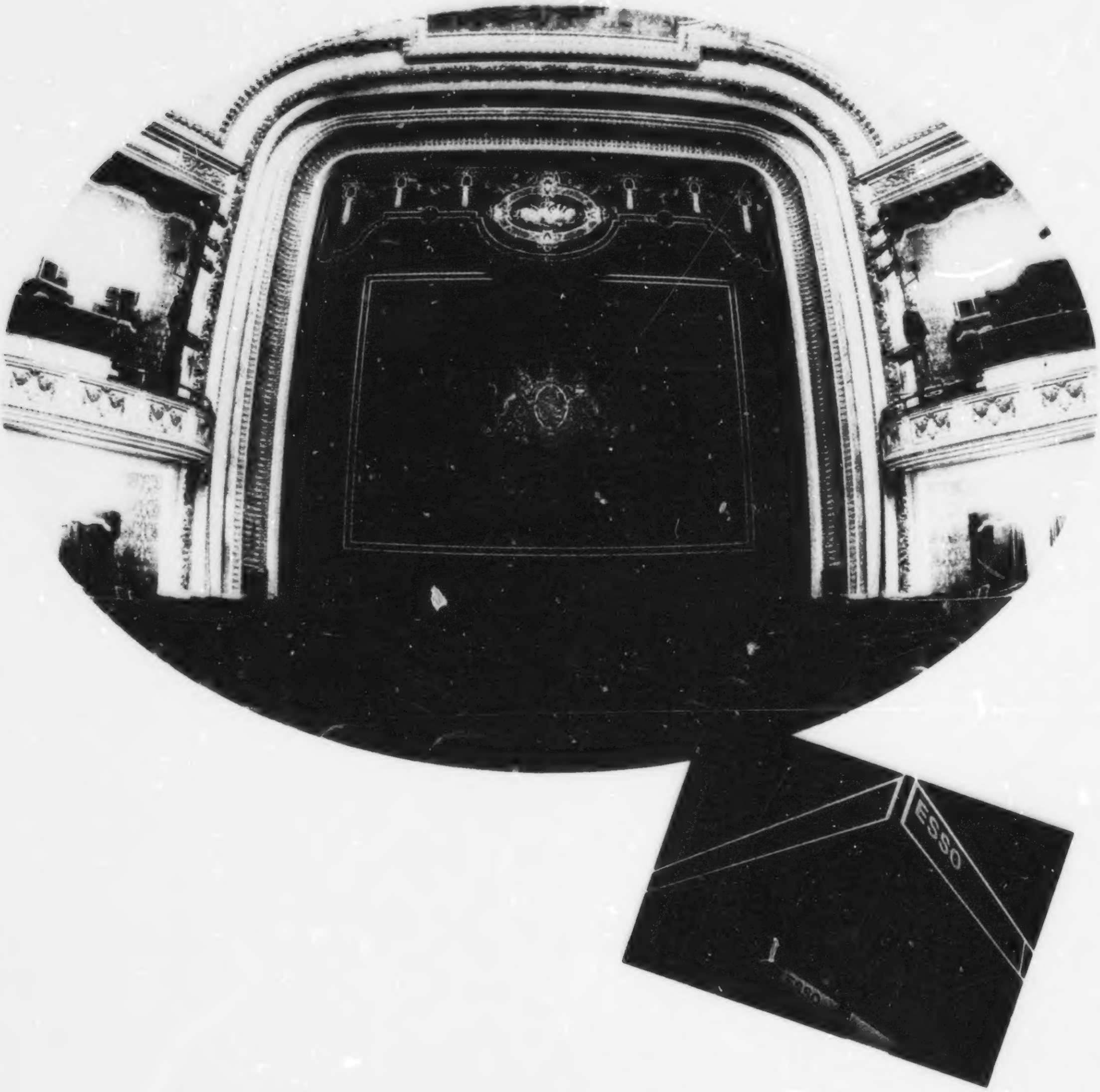

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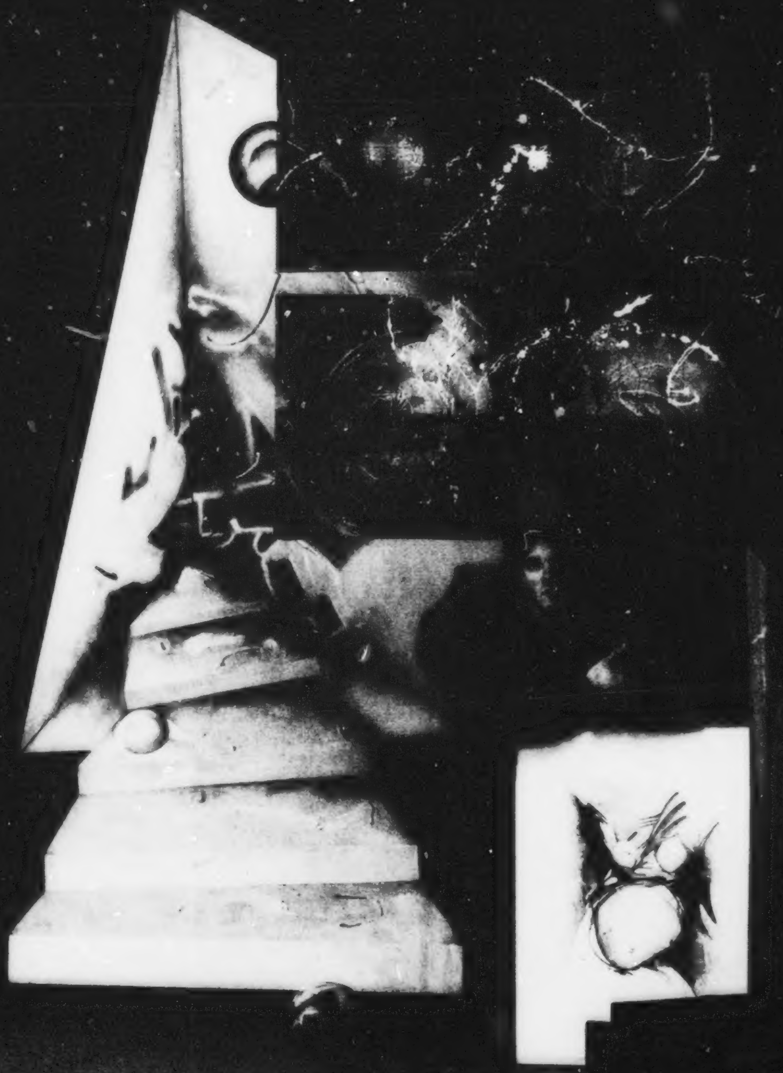

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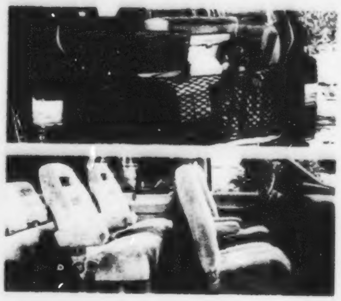

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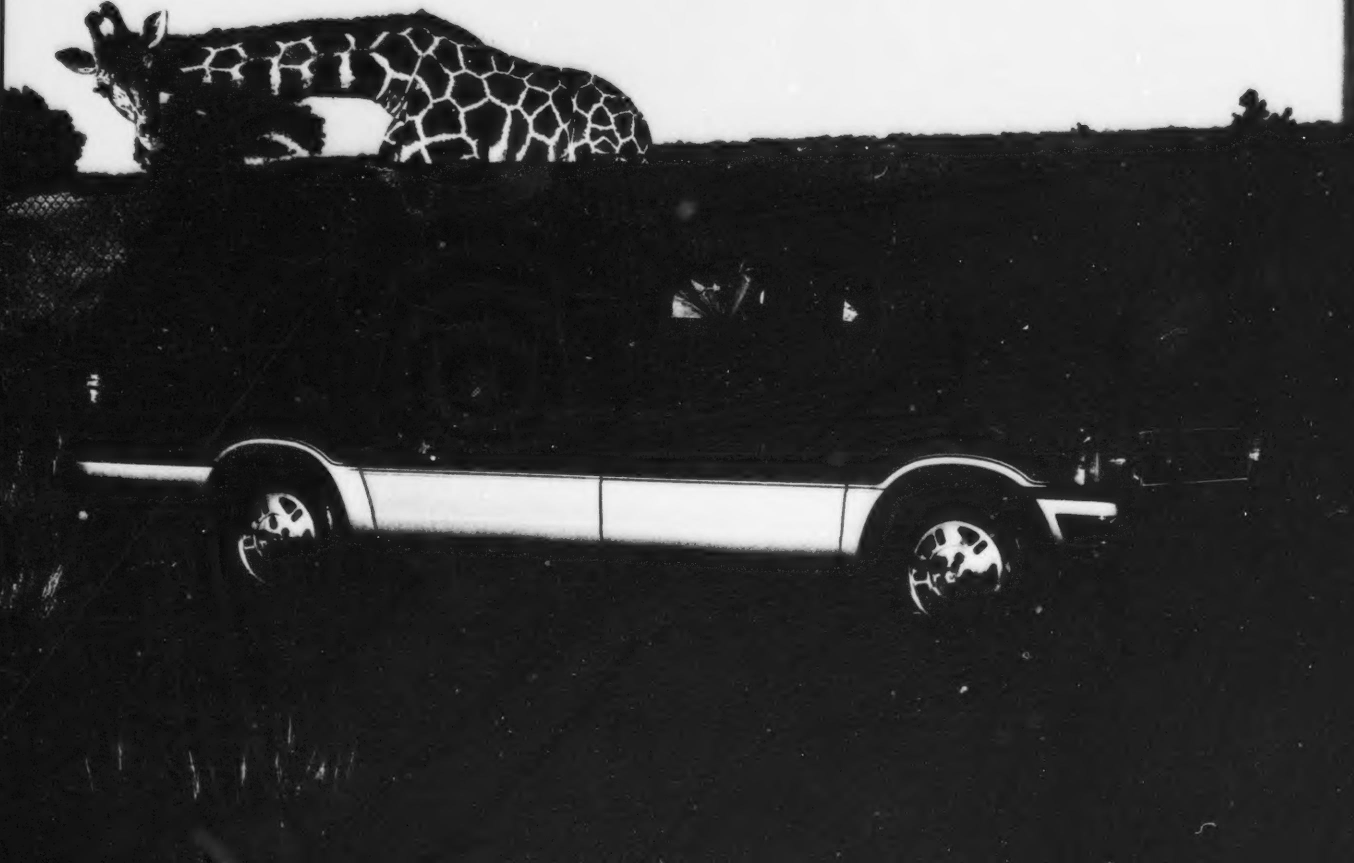

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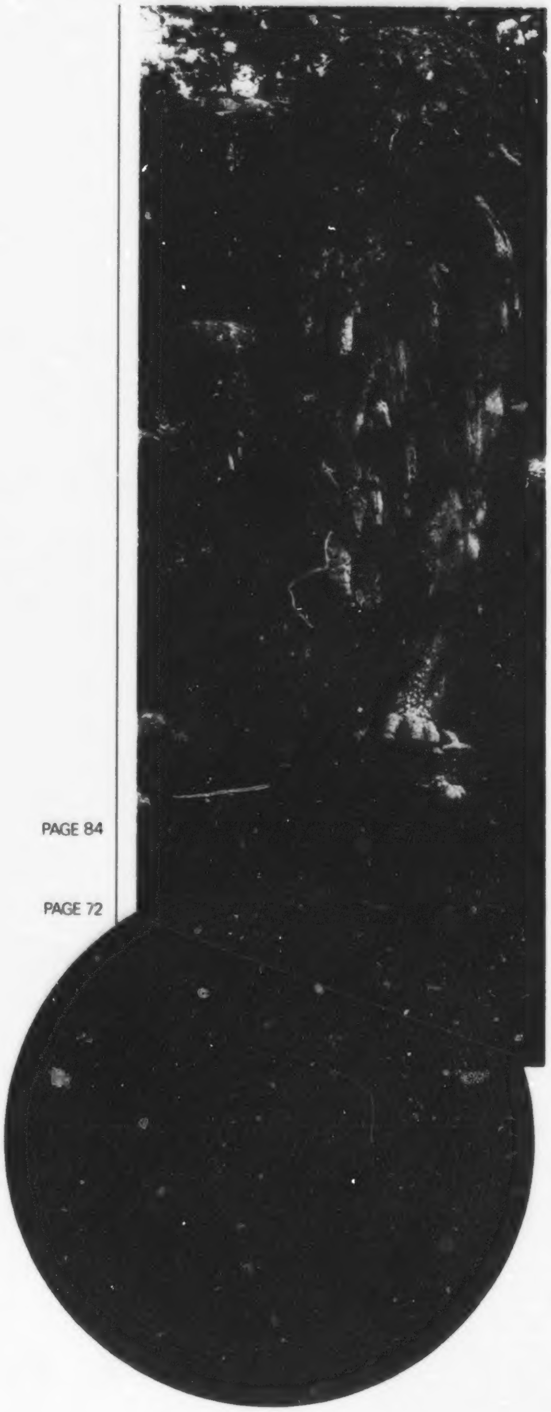

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Six Artists from Quebec

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Spring/March 1989

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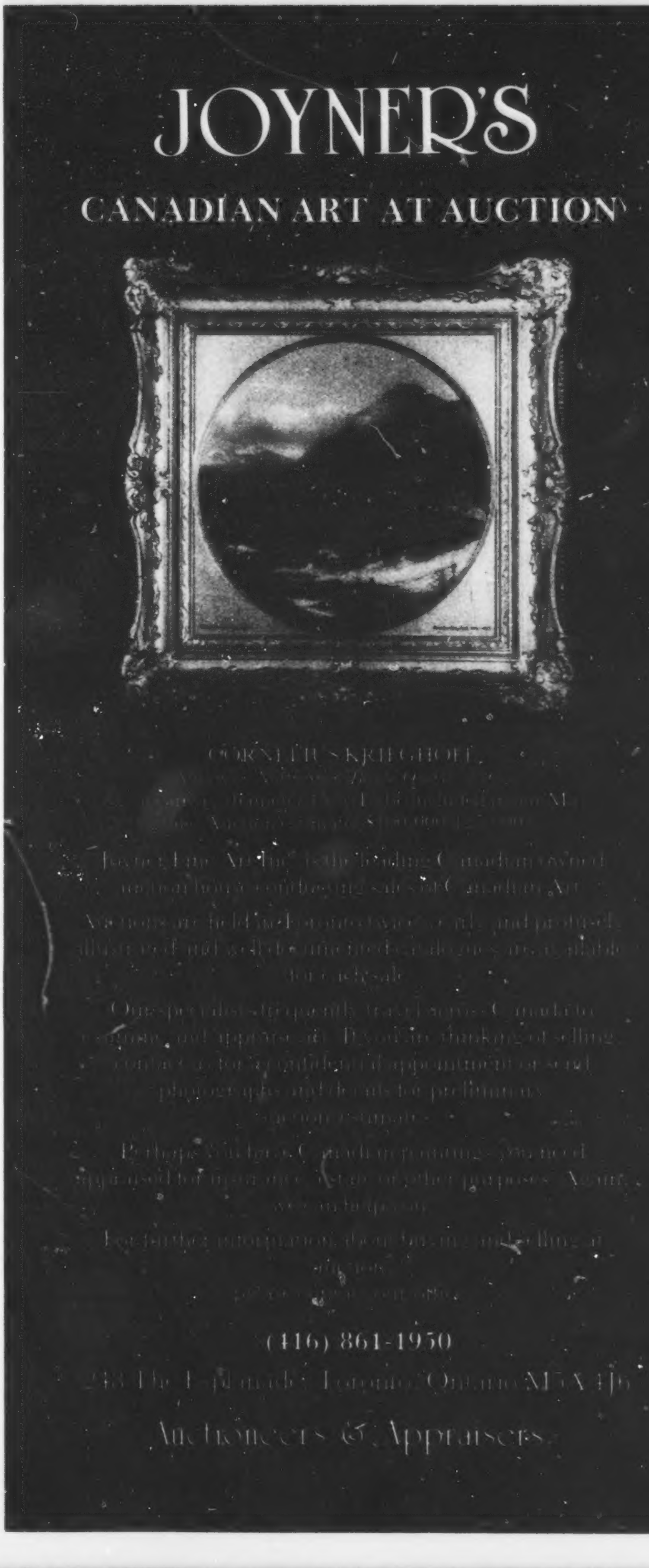
COVER: *UNTITLED (CANADIAN ARTIST)*,
1989, BY JANA STERBAK,
PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAUL ORENSTEIN



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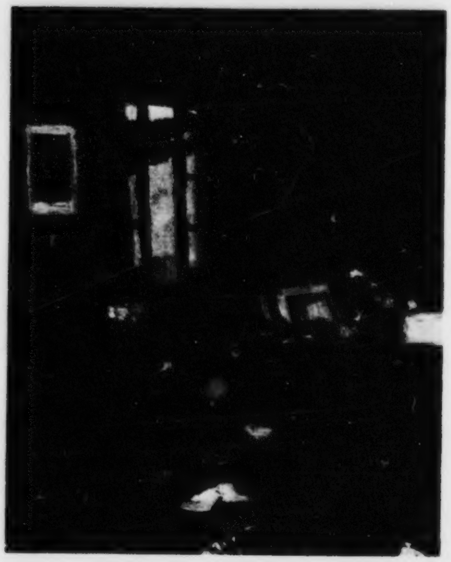

William Goodridge Roberts,
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EDITORIAL

What constitutes a successful magazine cover is one of the most debated subjects in magazine publishing. The reason is simple: there seems to be no single formula for success. Expensive market-research surveys have proved to be no more adept at coming up with appealing covers (that is, covers that attract a large number and broad range of readers) than have the sometimes arcane opinions held by experienced magazine editors and designers.

There are, however, certain basic principles common to every cover. Obviously, the editor and art director want the cover to be visually striking so that it stands out from the multitude of other competing magazines (that are, of course, simultaneously attempting to do precisely the same thing). The cover lines have to be short enough to be read at a glance and clear enough to give readers a sense of the magazine's contents. And the choice of the cover image should not only represent one particular story but also reflect the general tone and spirit of the magazine as a whole. Covers give magazines their identity. They are at once advertisements for the magazine and statements of intent.

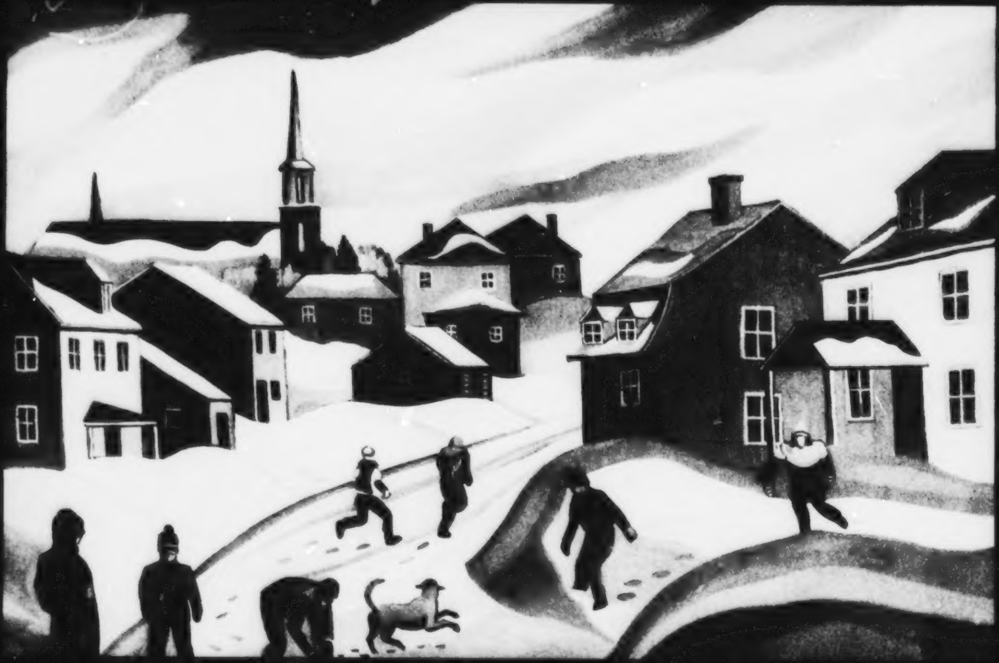
In the past several issues of *Canadian Art* we have shown artists' work on the cover, and this issue is no exception. What makes this cover special, though, is that the photograph (of artist Jana Sterbak) was conceived by Sterbak herself especially for *Canadian Art*. She was photographed by Paul Orenstein, who has worked with Sterbak in the past and who also took the portrait shot of her that appears inside the magazine, accompanying a piece on Sterbak's work by Marni Jackson.

Also in this issue is a brief look at the ongoing vitality of Canadian color painting and a photographic portfolio devoted to the timely art of the garden.

We're still in the process of redesigning and refining the look and contents of the magazine, a process that will likely continue, to a greater or lesser extent, in every issue, as we respond to our own and readers' interests and tastes. The most apparent change in this issue is the back page, which has been retitled "Endpaper" and which provides an opportunity for writers to critically consider various small but important aspects of the art world — in this case, the dubious pleasures of Acoustiguides.

What else is there in this issue? Well, as we like to say on the cover, much more.

JOCELYN LAURENCE
EDITOR



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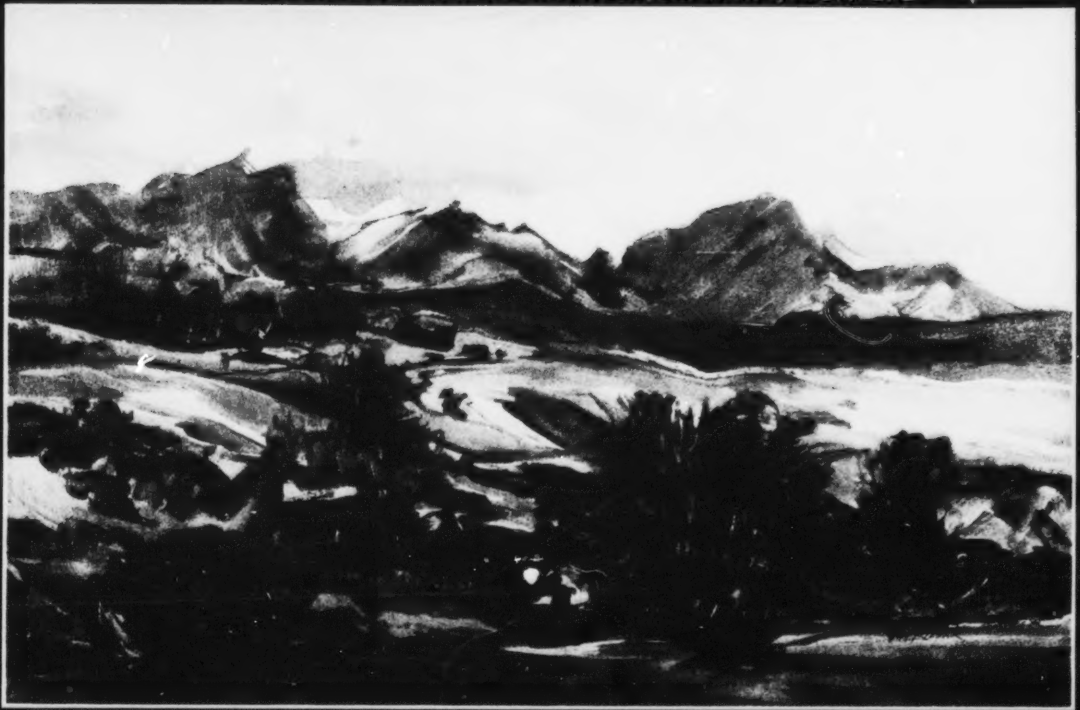

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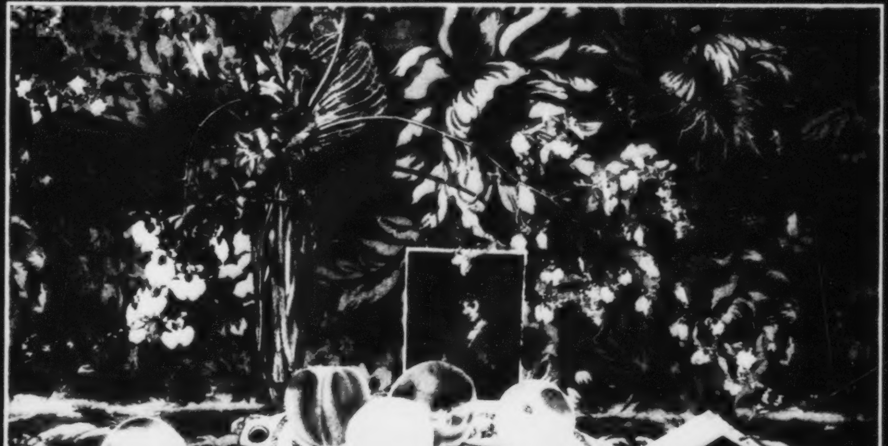

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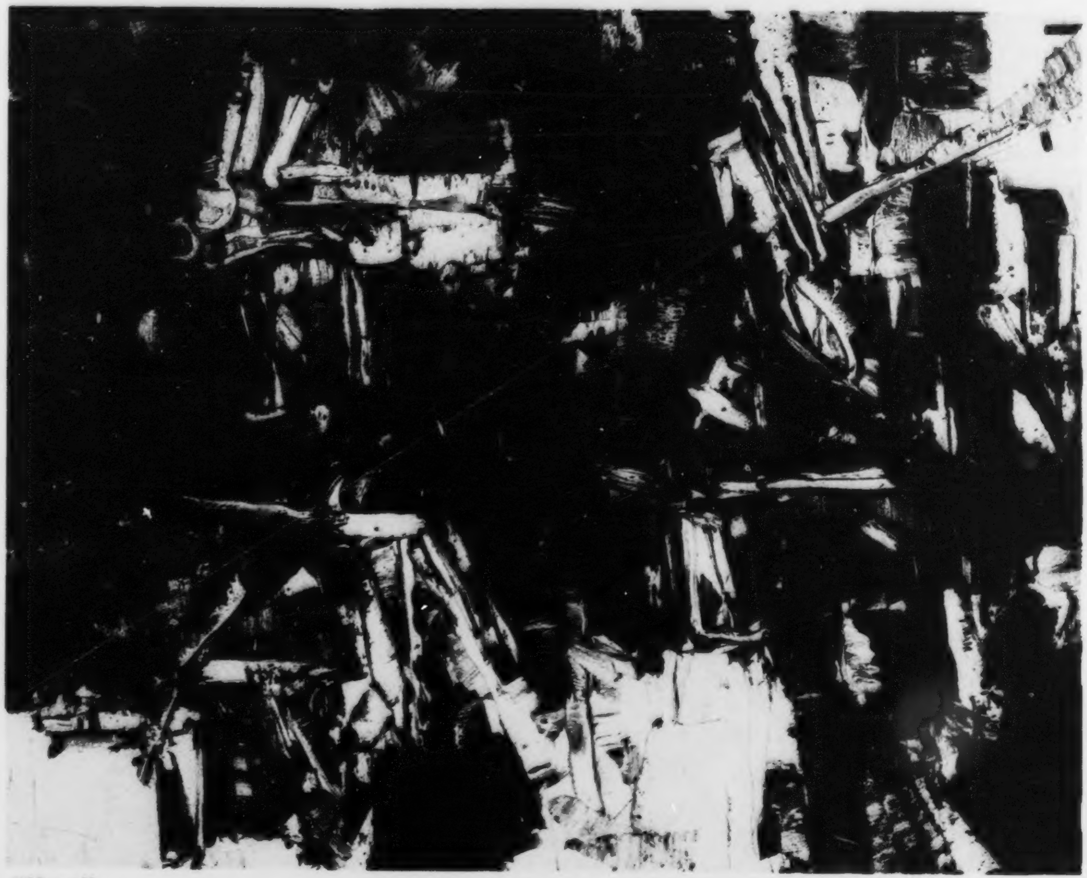

"Heurt" *Oil / 1957 - 32" x 39½"*

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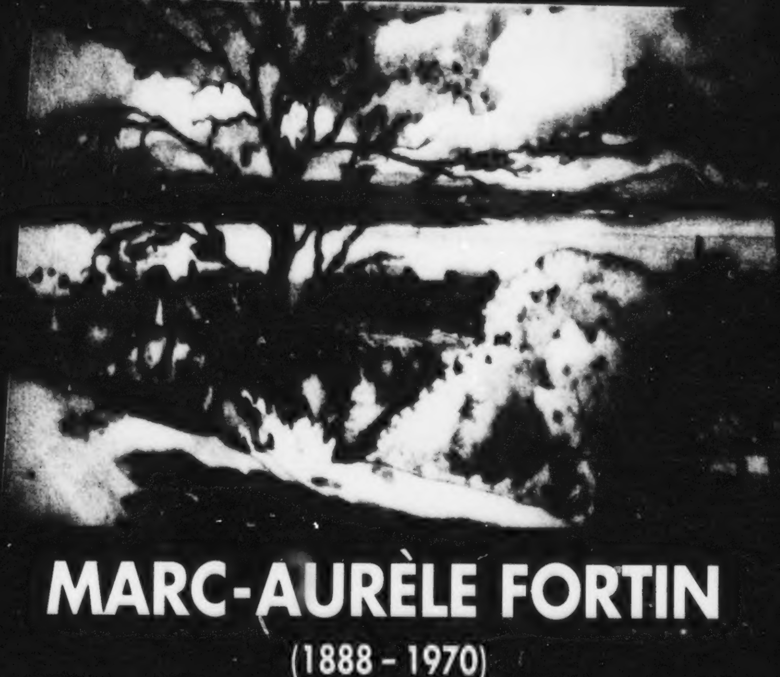

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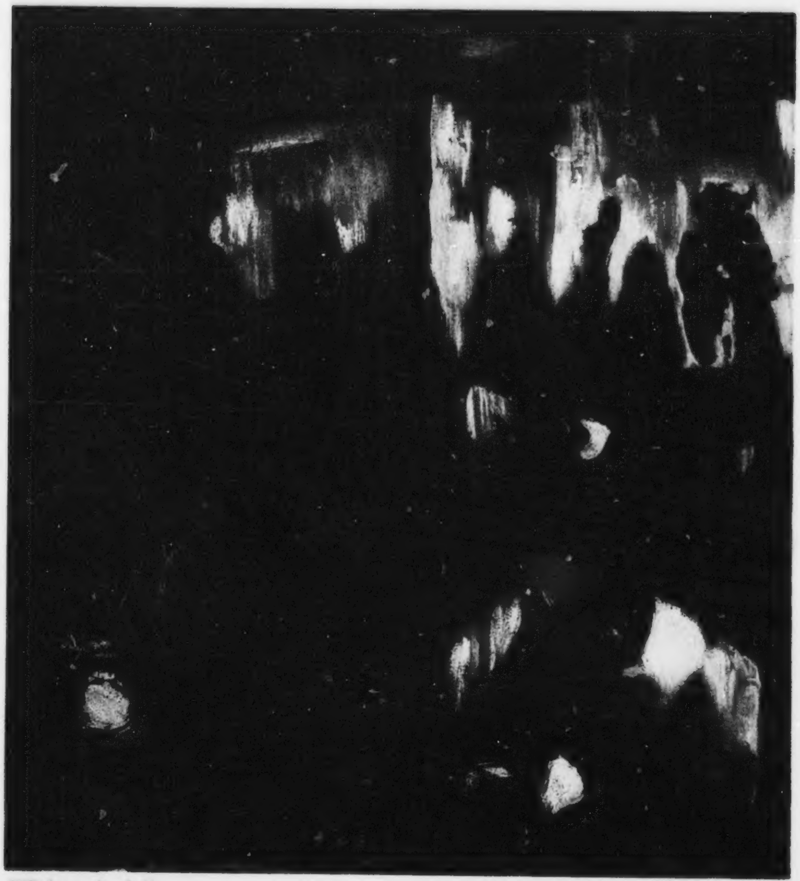

"Crème glacée" *Oil / 48" x 38"*

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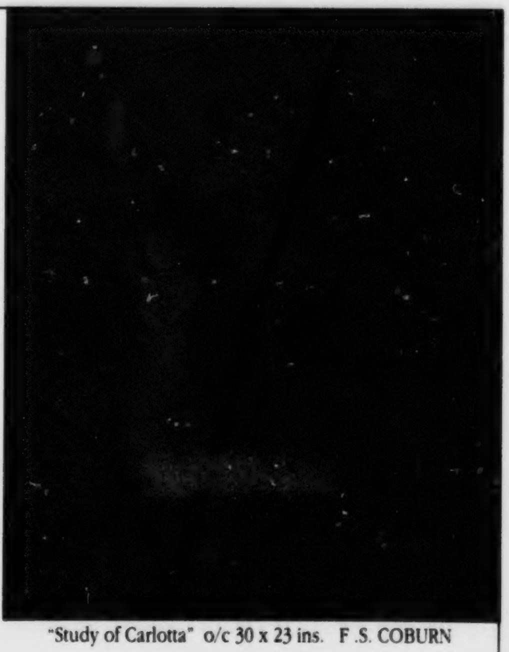

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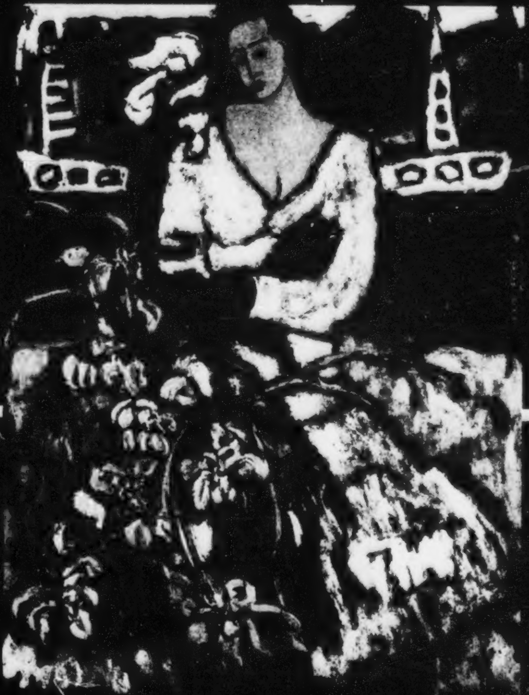

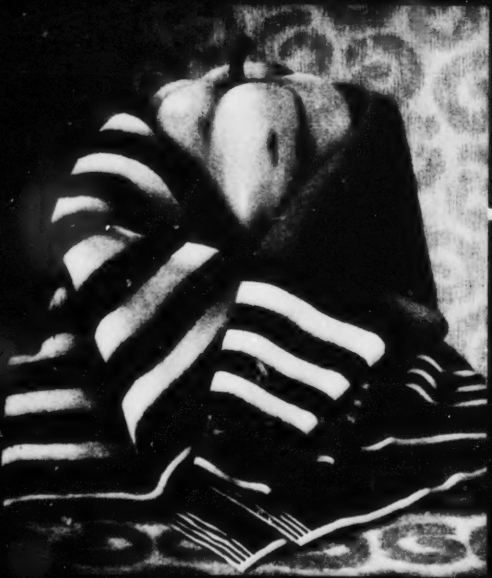

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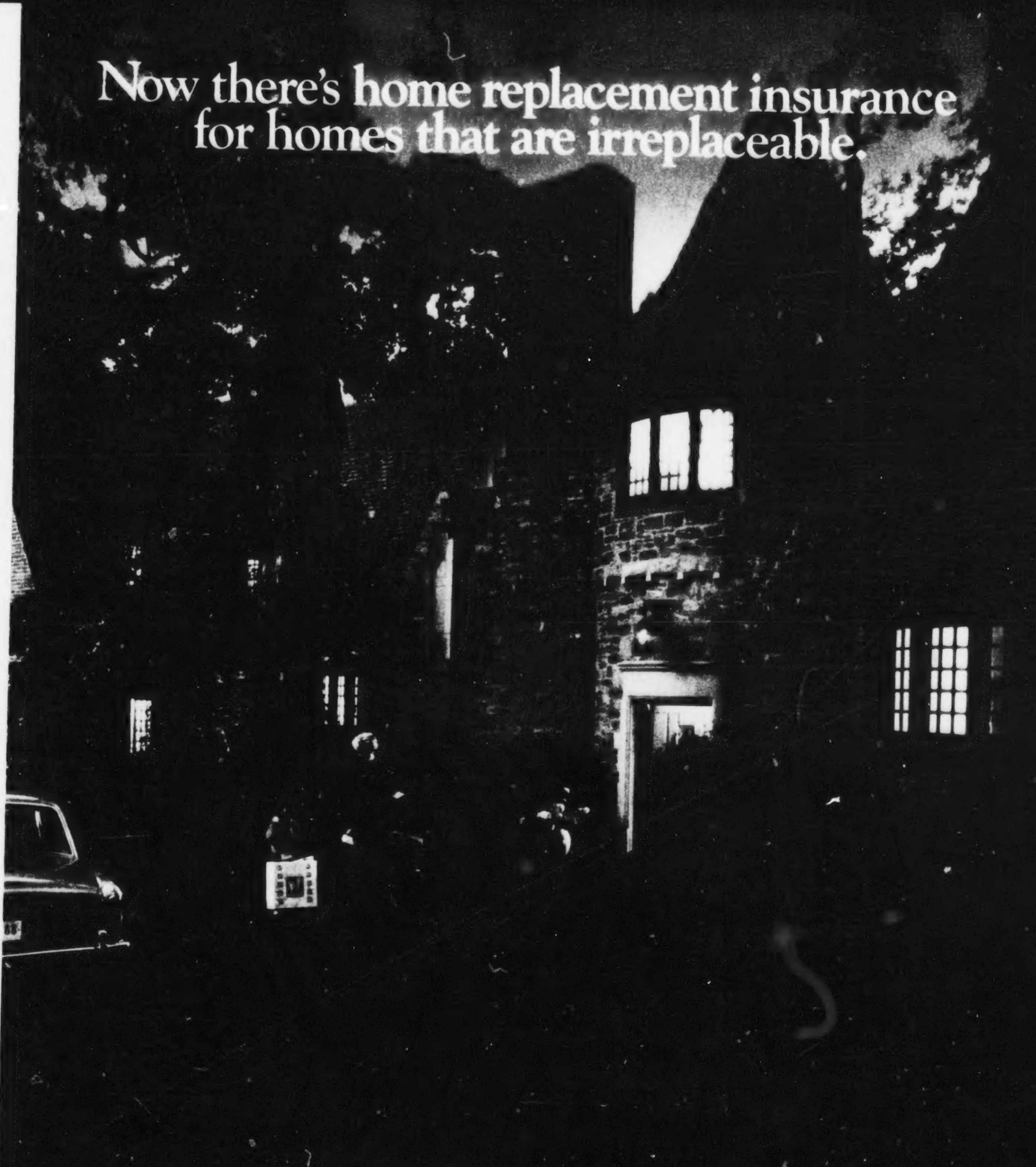
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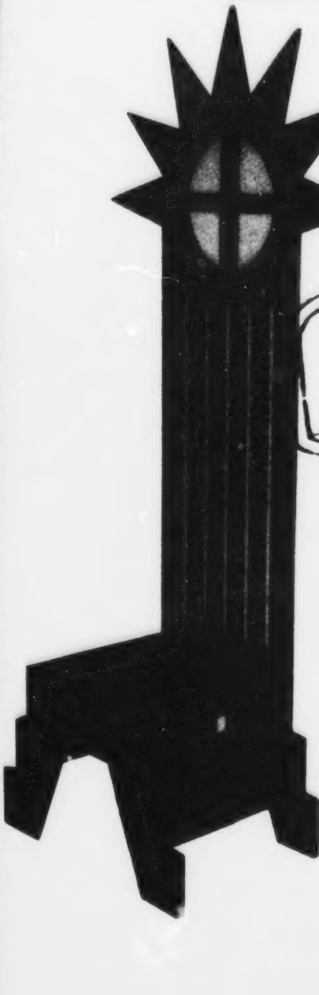
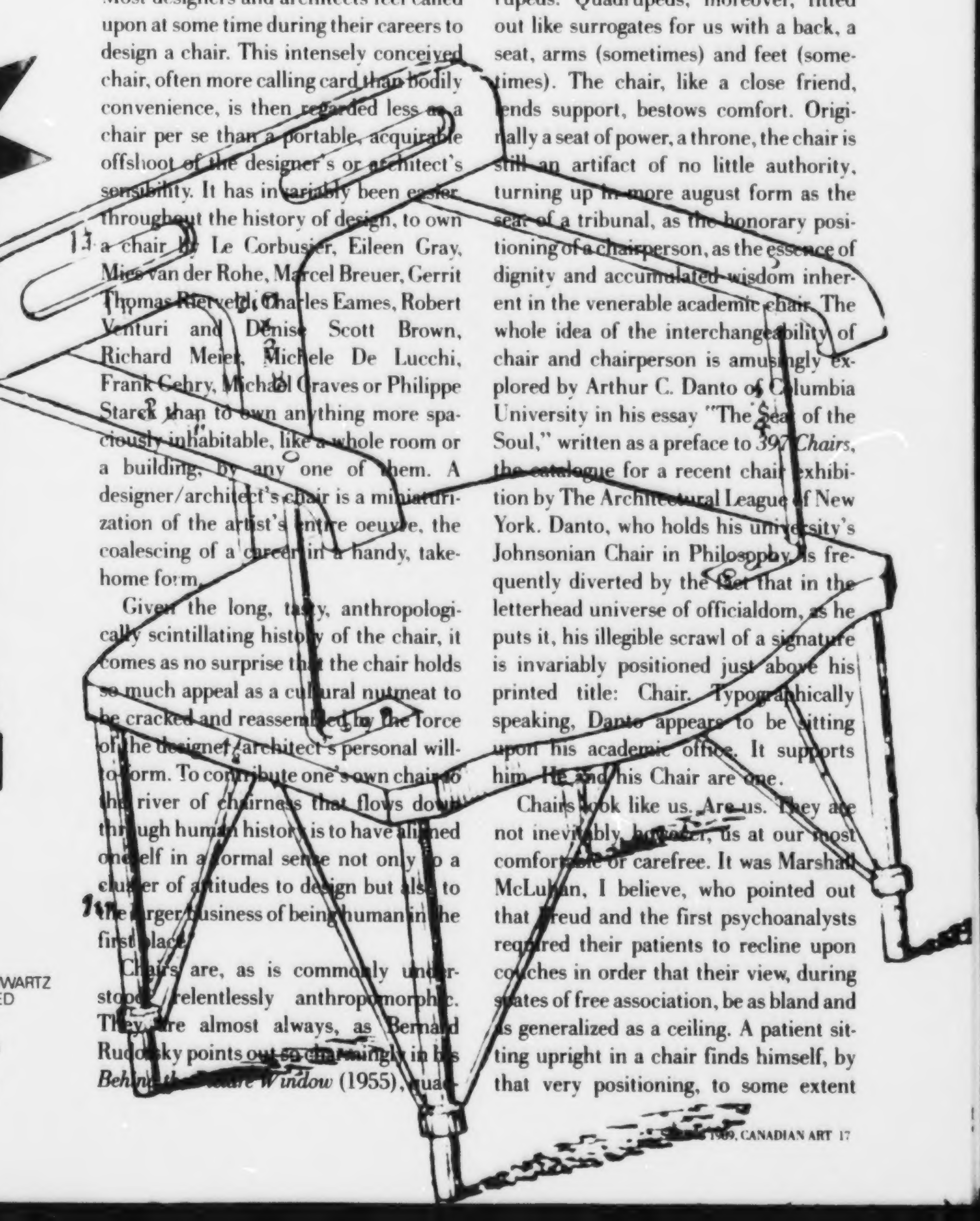
BY GARY MICHAEL DAULT

The Object

FOUR LEGS GOOD: THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CHAIR AS HISTORICAL HOUSE PET





Most designers and architects feel called upon at some time during their careers to design a chair. This intensely conceived chair, often more calling card than bodily convenience, is then regarded less as a chair per se than a portable, acquirable offshoot of the designer's or architect's sensibility. It has invariably been easier throughout the history of design, to own a chair by Le Corbusier, Eileen Gray, Mies van der Rohe, Marcel Breuer, Gerrit Thomas Rietveld, Charles Eames, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Richard Meier, Michele De Lucchi, Frank Gehry, Michael Graves or Philippe Starck than to own anything more spaciously inhabitable, like a whole room or a building, by any one of them. A designer/architect's chair is a miniaturization of the artist's entire oeuvre, the coalescing of a career in a handy, take-home form.

Given the long, tasty, anthropologically scintillating history of the chair, it comes as no surprise that the chair holds so much appeal as a cultural nutmeat to be cracked and reassembled by the force of the designer/architect's personal will-to-form. To contribute one's own chair to the river of chairness that flows down through human history is to have aligned oneself in a formal sense not only to a cluster of attitudes to design but also to the larger business of being human in the first place.

Chairs are, as is commonly understood, relentlessly anthropomorphic. They are almost always, as Bernard Rudofsky points out so charmingly in his *Behind the Picture Window* (1955), quadrupeds. Quadrupeds, moreover, fitted out like surrogates for us with a back, a seat, arms (sometimes) and feet (sometimes). The chair, like a close friend, lends support, bestows comfort. Originally a seat of power, a throne, the chair is still an artifact of no little authority, turning up in more august form as the seat of a tribunal, as the honorary positioning of a chairperson, as the essence of dignity and accumulated wisdom inherent in the venerable academic chair. The whole idea of the interchangeability of chair and chairperson is amusingly explored by Arthur C. Danto of Columbia University in his essay "The Seat of the Soul," written as a preface to *397 Chairs*, the catalogue for a recent chair exhibition by The Architectural League of New York. Danto, who holds his university's Johnsonian Chair in Philosophy, is frequently diverted by the fact that in the letterhead universe of officialdom, as he puts it, his illegible scrawl of a signature is invariably positioned just above his printed title: Chair. Typographically speaking, Danto appears to be sitting upon his academic office. It supports him. He and his Chair are one.

Chairs look like us. Are us. They are not inevitably, however, us at our most comfortable or carefree. It was Marshall McLuhan, I believe, who pointed out that Freud and the first psychoanalysts required their patients to recline upon couches in order that their view, during states of free association, be as bland and as generalized as a ceiling. A patient sitting upright in a chair finds himself, by that very positioning, to some extent

ABOVE: *THE LIBERTY CHAIR* (1983) BY FREDERIC SCHWARTZ, ANDERSON/SCHWARTZ ARCHITECTS. HARDWOOD, HAND-RUBBED LACQUER, 26" X 18" X 80". RIGHT: A "MOST COMFORTABLE ARTICLE FOR A COTTAGER," FROM THE *ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF COTTAGE, FARM AND VILLAGE ARCHITECTURE AND FURNITURE* (1836) other-directed, confrontational, in dialogue with the immediate world rather than with his memories and dreams. Chairs, in other words, are the very essence of a Point of View. Many of our most cherished chairs are not comfortable. Their historical importance, their symbolic urgency, their social usefulness preclude and transcend comfort. The truth is, most of us are rather discomfited by chairs, fidgeting, curling up, constantly shifting about. "To assume postures that in no way conform to the contour of the piece of furniture on which we happen to sit," writes Rudofsky, "...these are not just symptoms of a general restlessness or irrepressible childishness; they illustrate the hypothetical nature of comfort."

What happens in a chair is almost invariably social, political, specific. Scarcely ever is what happens there profound or archetypal. Our centrally meaningful moments — birth, copulation, death — take place in beds, not chairs. By that same token, it is curious how underdesigned beds are, for the most part. There are a few exceptions: architect John Hejduk's massive Shaker-derived bed unveiled last year at Milan's 27th Salone del Mobile has a kind of brutish power, for example. For the most part, however, beds remain bland, undifferentiated planes of pure potential. Grounds against which we perform our most solemn and essential activities.

Chairs, in contrast to beds, are intimate, delicate, civilized. A bed, as Bernard Rudofsky points out, hides us, whereas the chair is "foil and pedestal. For that very reason," Rudofsky contends, "we are often ill at ease in a chair. The more sensitive among us are aware of the ludicrous aspects of sitting on chairs — impaled on four toothpicks, as it were, or, draped, limp like an oyster, over what resembles an outsized half-shell. The eagerness with which tubular chairs were accepted in the twenties may have an explanation in the fact that they made the sitter look less propped up — cantilevered chairs have all the untroubled ease of the seats of a merry-go-round."

Young children hate sitting in chairs. If a child can find any way at all to distort a chair's function and turn it into something else (monkey bars are best), it will. Highchairs are presumably implements of torture, junior stocks, little elevated prisons that bind the child about so that it can be brought (kicking and screaming) into the felicity of the nurturing family. Children are essentially floor dwellers. So are most of the world's peoples.

Rudofsky, in a delightful book called *now I lay me down to eat*, written 25 years after *Behind the Picture Window*, has a good deal to say about his aversion to chairs and his admiration for those cultures that appear to equate the act of sitting erect in a chair with rigidity and repression. Christ's gathering of his disciples into that hieratic last supper, fixed in our minds forever by Leonardo, was much more likely a traditional gathering together around a central table of 13 friends who would have reclined for the occasion upon an arrangement of three large beds or couches referred to as a triclinium. All through history (Eastern rather than Western history) both the exalted and the humble sit on the floor, not on chairs. The floor is basic, as it were. So is the cushion on the ground and the dais and the blanket on the grass (and the tablecloth — thus the faint licentiousness, according to Rudofsky, of the Western picnic). There is an inexpressible satisfaction in performing some ur-action such as eating while stretched out upon the beating breast of mother earth herself. The most sensuously rewarding meal I've ever eaten took place in a crowded Bedouin tent, a brief candle of an oasis lit against the absolute darkness of the Negev, 50 miles from Jerusalem. There was mutton and mounds of sticky rice piled up on greasy platters, all of them placed among us. We were stretched out on carpets, blankets, pillows, all smelling of the sweet dust of the desert. The tent floated through the night like a cloud. But, as Rudofsky reminds us, it is no doubt true that, by and large, "the part of humanity which customarily sits without chairs (or walks without shoes) rates low with us."

Chairs hold us so securely (they do, at least, if we are decorous about the way we are behaving) that to sit in them properly is to play by Western society's rules. A chair helps us acquire the bearing that betokens a certain seriousness of purpose. "Alas, in our society," Rudofsky laments, "growing up means to acquire *rigor vitae* (to coin a phrase), the stiffening of body and mind. Far from being regarded as a defect, rigidity connotes class...." Our chairs are perhaps residually Victorian, holding us as vertically as Victorian clothing held the Victorians themselves. Even so presumably plump and voluptuous a chair as Corbusier's famous *Le gran confort* armchair of 1928 is surprisingly strict and demanding of its occupant. Only during the 1960s, during the world-around hippie experiment in certain limited but touching methodologies of personal expressiveness, did designers begin tentatively to produce chairs with a less rigid program than usual — floppy beanbag chairs, for example, such as Zanotta's Sacco chair (1968), and that same Milanese company's transparent inflatable chair, the so-called Blow chair by Jonathan De Pas, Donato D'Urbino, Paolo Lomazzi and Scholari (1967). Here, briefly, were chairs you could flop formlessly into and keep in motion as if they were upright waterbeds. They are curiosities now, back for a visit as we ride out the rather forced gaiety of the '60s revival that has somehow come to pass.

The chair, the upright, uptight, all-out Western chair, is obviously here to dwell among us forever. Our architect and designers bend it to their sculptural wills, making it as glamorous as jewellery (as, for example, do Richard Meier and Philippe Starck, both of whom make pretty chairs nobody can bear to sit on) or as mordantly funny and salaciously informed as a new-wave standup comic (Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown). Michael Graves dreams the chairs of his childhood and hauls them back out of history. Ettore Sottsass's chairs are confectioner's marble, so riddled with irony and with their maker's hollow poetic search for a lost monumentality that they can only be gazed upon in our Museums of Perpetual Regret. Why do we love them all so much when they don't work? "Sitting on chairs," writes Bernard Rudofsky, "is an acquired habit, like smoking, and about as wholesome. The chair's supposed indispensability, its indisputable position as the very hallmark of Western civilization makes it nearly immune to unkind thoughts. From an article of trade, it has been promoted to an article of faith." Amen.

BY SUSAN CREAN

The Female Gaze

EYE OF THE TIGRESS: THE EMBATTLED (RE)VISION OF THE FEMALE ARTIST

CAMILLE
CLAUDEL
AT 19.
FAR RIGHT
ÇACOUNTALA (1905).
MARBLE,
37½" X 32¼" X 15¾"

It wasn't so very long ago that women were prohibited from joining the ranks of professional artists because they didn't have the right qualifications. They lacked the qualifications because they were officially barred from life-drawing classes considered mandatory for any fine arts diploma. This proscription had nothing to do with the artistic abilities of women or pedagogical theory; it had to do with sex and social decorum, which at the time decreed it unseemly for young women to attend life classes in the company of male students. That would mean working together from live models, which is to say *naked female* models. It would mean allowing female students to witness male delectation of the flesh of his desire; it would make them voyeurs, or worse, homoerotic participants.

Nudity in the 19th century was — and to some degree is still today — equated with sexuality; studying from the nude was tantamount to the admission and expression of carnal knowledge. It was bad enough for a woman to model for an artist, and a risk to her reputation. But at least it preserved the usual scheme of things: woman as passive muse, man as active ego. Thus, even if a woman studied from the nude alone and in private, she would break the bounds of convention, assuming the male position, becoming the eye and architect of the narrative. Whether the model was male or female, the infraction was the same. To depict human nakedness was to announce one's libidinous imagination, one's "virility" — something of an etymological impossibility under the circumstances.

This history makes the achievement of the French sculptor Camille Claudel, whose life and work is just now emerging from abject obscurity, the more astonishing. Claudel was born in 1864 to middle-class parents in the village of Villeneuve-sur-Fère. A superbly gifted child, she was encouraged by her father to develop her talent and by the age of 15 had already attracted the attention of local sculptors. At 17, confident and determined, she began formal study in Paris the only way a woman could in the 1880s, by apprenticing with another artist. In 1882, she joined the studio of August Rodin, who was then on the threshold of fame and fortune, and there she produced a remarkable and audacious body of work — portraits, busts and nude figures (male and female) that confirmed her genius to her contemporaries. She also worked on some of Rodin's projects, apparently unpaid and certainly uncredited. (It is known, for example, that she modelled the feet and hands of the *Burghers of Calais*.) Claudel became Rodin's model and his lover and, for the better part of 16 years, his artistic accomplice.

French society, which may have invented *la vie bohème*, had no way to accommodate an autonomous woman like Claudel who insisted on appropriating the male role. It was one thing to have placed herself beyond the pale of accepted femininity; it was another to do so in public by becoming an artist and producing the overtly sensual work she did. But as long as her father was alive, Claudel had a protector. And as long as she remained with Rodin, she could function on the fringe of the art world in his shadow — although who contributed more to whom artistically is a question art historians must now answer.

Comparisons, in this case, are enlightening. Consider Claudel's masterpiece, *The Abandonment* (*Çacountala*, first version, 1888) and Rodin's *The Kiss* (1886-98). Both depict a man and woman in amorous embrace; both sculptures surge with sexual energy, the figures sensuous and marble-smooth in frank celebration of heterosexual love. There the similarity ends. Rodin shows a man and woman seated together, she cleaving unto him, her arms wrapped around his neck as he leans over to claim her with a kiss; his the dominating figure, hers the focus of his ardor. In *The Abandonment*, the positions are reversed and neither sits sedately. The man kneels, reaching up to enfold the woman as she, half-seated, leans toward him, hand to her breast, her head slumping forward till her forehead touches his. Brilliantly, Claudel captures a moment of passionate surrender, achieving a steamy, erotic intensity that makes *The Kiss* seem like mild-mannered foreplay by comparison. Moreover, she manages to solve the problem of mutuality: the lovers succumb to each other with equal abandon and mutual consent. One century later it is Claudel's piece that sparkles with ingenuity and Rodin's that sinks into cliché.

When Camille Claudel broke finally with Rodin in 1898, she struck out on her own in a world that had no place for her. Rodin's may have been the generation that first defined creativity as the product of sexuality, and sex as fit subject matter for Art, but there was room for the (heterosexual) male gaze only. By aesthetic as well as social and psychological standards, Camille Claudel could not exist. Despite the recognition of her peers, the commissions did not materialize and without assistance she was consigned to live in poverty, isolation and ignomy. As she despaired of her situation she produced less and less, becoming convinced that Rodin and others were stealing her ideas, profiting from them, and conspiring against her. Within a week of her father's death in 1913, her worst fears were confirmed when her mother and brother had her committed to an insane asylum. There she spent the last 30 years of her life, her family willing to foot the bill to keep her locked up after having refused to support her career as an artist.

Nowadays, women can go to art school and can even draw nudes. But has the art world really earned its reputation as a sexually liberated avant-garde? When you think of the symphony of differing voices and modes of sexual expression that exist in popular culture, the answer comes back a resounding "no." Art criticism talks a lot about sexuality, but it is an undeniably uptight, heterosexual and male sexuality. The female gaze is scarcely acknowledged. Only a few years ago the Royal Ontario Museum banned an issue of *Artmagazine* that contained illustrations of tumescent plaster penises by Toronto sculptor Badanna Zack. And last year's Joyce Wieland retrospective at the Art Gallery of Ontario served to remind us how tongue-tied critics and curators can become at the sight of female desire. For if ever there was an artist whose aesthetic exudes eroticism, whose language is pure physical passion, it is Wieland. When she declares "I love Canada," she affixes the words to a double-bed-sized quilt. When she experiments with light and form in her film *Water Sark*, she uses her own body, naked and voluptuous in the bathtub. Yet this aspect of Wieland's art is habitually downplayed or ignored.

Similarly, the official view of Emily Carr is strangely puritan, passing over the lustful qualities of her painting and the fecundity of her forest-scapes, dwelling instead on Freudian interpretations of her creativity, which has been variously "explained" as sexual sublimation (she was, you see, unmarried and presumed celibate) or repressed anger.

In literature, the feminist investigation of language and gender has opened up old forms and structures to new ways of being. Writers like Nicole Brossard, Daphne Marlatt, Dionne Brand and Gail Scott (to name a few) speak of "writing the body" and the body they write is lesbian. Their work is not marginal, though certainly experimental, and it has been heralded as one of the most compelling forces in modern Canadian writing. How different the visual arts. Here the voice/eye of women revisioning the world is (mis)understood as a strictly political and non-aesthetic event. And it has been ghettoized. Only in the last couple of years have we seen any attempts to take on this absence, to elucidate the monosexuality (heterosexism) of the art scene.

One important occasion was the exhibition *Sight Specific: Lesbians & Representation* presented at A Space in March 1987. Intended to contribute to the feminist/lesbian discussion about the politics of representation, the show also addressed questions about the racial and aesthetic relations between sexual practice and the production of images. There we saw the reclamation of the female body as a site of power, resistance and regeneration. In Grace Channer's painting *But Some of Us Are Brave*, six strong-bodied black women sweep across the triptych foreground, tending, gathering, protecting the earth and the children at their feet while the violence of history unfolds in the background beyond. In Lynne Fernie's *The Spectacular Body* (two projections on ink drawings), the subject is a visual/intellectual play on the lesbian dilemma. On the left panel are eight frames from a super-8 film of a woman's upper body covered with painted symbols, and on the right, the total eclipse of the sun. "The lesbian body," writes Fernie (who was also the co-ordinator of the show), "is caught within a representational order which consumes her as fantasy at the same time it ensures her absence. Thus eclipsed, she becomes tangled between a twilight world where she experiences her self and a fluorescent world which degrades her into spectacle."

In Stephanie Martin's painting *Is it true what they say about colrd pussy?*, the female body stretches out like an undulating landscape across the lower third of two panels. Along each side is a color bar (monochrome on the left panel, "in color" on the right), which combine to create a painterly satire of sexual hierarchy and racial stereotyping.

Other works in the show by Jude Johnston, Nina Levitt, Marg Moores and Cyndra MacDowall delve into the sticky terrain of female lust, celebrating, announcing, claiming the forbidden fruits of women's love. Hot, heady, uncompromising and brave. Camille Claudel would have understood.

BY JOHN SCOTT

The Screen

KING AND COURTIER: ARE MAINLINE ARTISTS MAKING TRACKS FOR THE MOVIES?

If there was an event in the last year that astonished the art world (which, by this time, should be inured to shock) it was the upcoming collaboration between writer Stephen King and artist Barbara Kruger on a limited edition of King's 40-page story *My Little Pony*, part of the Whitney Museum of American Art's *Artists and Writers* series.

Kruger, of course, is one of the most internationally important contemporary visual artists. Her photo-text works, which have revitalized the political photo-montage techniques of John Heartfield, not only deconstruct the repressive structures of power and authority inherent in recent representation but simultaneously challenge the privileged position of male viewers. Kruger has demonstrated a keen awareness of the social and political importance of her position as a primary woman artist and the almost historical necessity of disseminating her images within the still largely male hegemony of Western culture. She is publicly articulate and politically astute, even though she has occasionally demonstrated the remorseless rationality of a Central Committee member.

King is almost a publishing industry unto himself. Has there ever been, in the history of human language, an author who has produced works that were so popular, so populist and with such a high kitsch potential? (I am excluding the Bible here, of course.) His horror novels seem to contain an almost adolescent apoliticality; only sometimes does his work hint at the radically transgressive potential of horror. Mostly, however, he

PHOTO COPYRIGHT 1988 TIMOTHY GREENFIELD-SANDERS

ABOVE
BARBARA KRUGER
LEFT
STEPHEN KING

COURTESY OF JIM SALZANO/NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY just reaffirms a set of front-porch, aw-shucks, middle-American values.

So why would Kruger have any truck with somebody as politically suspect as Stephen King, especially in what is essentially a secondary role? Kruger's rationale is supposedly based on the potential for wide-scale dissemination of her images outside the context of the art-world, although the 250 finished books will sell for $2,200 U.S. each. Possibly people in shopping malls and supermarkets will hear about Kruger and her work for the first time, thanks to Stephen King's far-reaching reputation. But the real reason for Kruger's willingness to collaborate probably lies beyond that rather shaky logic. Just how many Stephen King novels (and stories) *haven't* been turned into films? Does Kruger hope this project will lead to a collaborative screenplay?

Film, according to Octavio Paz, is *the* sentimental and psychological medium of the 20th century. Moreover, it is arguably the most profound manifestation of the Zeitgeist, and therefore the seat of real power. Power relationships begin deep within the social nexus and carry within them the imprint and analysis of every previous historical era. We are now, according to Heidegger, in an era of technological thinking that concerns itself solely with the imposition of its will upon the physical world. The world used to be synonymous with material reality, but is this still true at the end of the Age of Reagan, when that reality is so secondary to the gigantic, all-embracing flow of information from film, TV and radio? Those demonic intellects, those Faustian energies, who for years have forced their wills on nature through the vehicle of technology, have now been drawn away from material conditions into furious engagement with the hyper-real. First they discovered America and subjugated its inhabitants. Then they colonized the world. Railways and steel mills followed. Now they make media, that glamorous, parading chaos of signifiers far removed from their reference, that remorseless doubling of the quickly decaying Real that constitutes, in Baudrillardian terminology, "the procession of the simulacra." Ultimately, the media are more real than reality, so why exercise power in a secondary realm? Why make laws? Let's make films.

In some ways Stephen King, through his books but perhaps especially through his films, may be one of the most powerful human beings alive. He has no political clout. He lacks the epic talent to inspire social change or the subtle ability to transform the way in which the reader sees him/herself. But he does have the ability to terrify large numbers of people, something he shares with major political leaders. (The desire to terrify others is a truly adolescent manifestation of power, but then, how many real adults do you know?)

Cultural production, like any creative act, involves if not an exercise of power then at least an invocation of it. Human identity begins in a state of the perceived omnipotence of the infantile ego. Maturing is the long painful process of coming to terms with external reality. Anyone who has watched a child discover drawing has seen a momentary recapturing of power, a primary feeling of omnipotence in the limited world of the crayon and the paper. The attraction of cultural production is an attempt to recapture that infantile sense of omnipotence.

Within the last 20 years, many artists who grew out of or identified with a notion of the personal signature and heroic singularity of the abstract-expressionist era have attempted secondary careers as rock or jazz musicians. Frustrated, and desiring a response just as visceral but much more public than the one they experienced through their working methods as painters (nobody cheers for a finished painting), they longed for the immediate gratification of spontaneous applause.

The nature of successful contemporary art, on the other hand, involves a quintessentially different personality — one that can manipulate larger cultural conditions, issues and ideas. To such artists, intuition is perhaps secondary to analysis. The artist has become an ordering fabricator, an administrator, perhaps even a bureaucrat — in other words, a film director.

To make film is to be meaningfully engaged with the medium wherein the Zeitgeist resides, to challenge the conceptual framework of large numbers of viewers and therefore transform social reality toward a preconceived and more perfect end. The best the static visual arts can hope for, however, is a kind of interior decoration for the forum of ideas, to subtly influence the viewer, the way a nice rug or drapes do, to suggest topics for an agenda of discourse. They can have a profound but limited impact in terms of a one-to-one relationship, but they are inherently limited in comparison with film. Considering this, it's not surprising how many artists are at least rumored to be involved in filmmaking, mostly writing screenplays (the now agreed-upon back door to directing). Some, like Robert Longo and Amos Poe, have written, designed and directed a number of heavy-metal rock videos. Sarah Charlesworth, an artist of considerable talent, rented her photo-montages as a backdrop for the film *9½ Weeks*, which should provide a horrible warning to us all about how far original intent can be perverted by cinematic momentum.

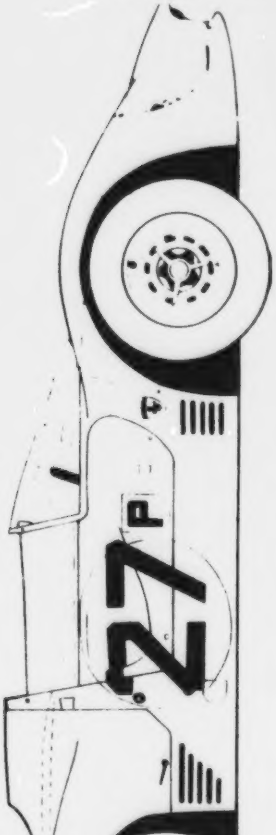
The deep-seated belief in the primary social importance of film isn't just an obsession in the minds of a few directors or artists but seems to operate on some broad social consensus. Anyone who has encountered a movie being shot in an urban centre knows what I mean. Otherwise, why do people happily tolerate the incredibly loutish behavior of film technicians as they wander through stores and homes like large mammals in electronic rut, looking for an outlet? Why does anybody passively acquiesce to the vehicular bullying of a Best Boy in a down coat? Even the police, those supposed guardians of our civic rights, get caught up in the cinematic flow, often seeming on the verge of clubbing into submission some bystander who inadvertently wanders into the camera's peripheral vision.

Making it big in the contemporary art world is no mean feat, requiring, besides talent, a developed historical sense of the moment, a good theoretical grounding and a certain degree of social and marketing skills. Only an unusually well-grounded ego doesn't overinflate in response to success and feel the need to extend its sphere of influence even further, aiming not to affect the social real, which no longer exists the way we once knew it, but to work with the now-primary reality, the constructed fiction of mass media. In other words, today the art world, tomorrow the hyper-real.

The Revolver

By David Cobb

ROLLING ASSETS: CAR-MAKER ENZO FERRARI'S FINE ART FOR THE FAST LANE



FAR LEFT: THE 1966 FERRARI TYPE 330P3
LEFT: ENZO FERRARI
BELOW: THE 1964 250 GTO

Best to get it out of the way off the top, it'll save time. I am an unreconstructed car lover. More: I would infinitely prefer sitting in one, idling among the fumes at a stoplight in rush hour, than backpacking high in the heady ozone of the Bugaboos, or pedalling a mountain bike anywhere. There now. That will have cleared the decks in a hurry. To confess to automophilia these days is to suffer dismissal as a sorry case of arrested development (in my own sorry case, of no development at all, since none of my children or their friends has ever revealed a similar bent); worse still, it damns you as being ecologically unsound. There are a few exceptions: I can think only of four-wheel-drive vehicles, the smaller the better, which suggest you'll be off to the Bugaboos soon as you get out of these clothes; and very old Volvos, which are Swedish, compellingly ugly and drive like tanks — and are therefore squarely on the side of the angels, who since time immemorial have hated sensual pleasures and loved saunas.

This is why angels everywhere, of course, abominate Ferraris, and why I can't get enough of them. The Ferrari is sensual pleasure in rolling 3-D, and it occupies a place in the psyche of the few true enthusiasts left that no other make approaches. How can this be so? It is not just that it is rich and rare; there are others richer and rarer. It is not that it is always beautiful: some of its bodywork has been sloppy, some of the designs lumpily uninspired. It is not that it is always blazingly fast: in 1986 it failed to win a Grand Prix, or indeed come close to one, and Britain's Honda-engined Team McLaren dominates current racing in a way Ferrari has never approached. And it is not because the Ferrari road cars — by which mere mortals may judge them, from their tail-lights and the sound of that amazing exhaust note ("like tearing calico paper," said Stirling Moss) — are direct developments of Ferrari race cars; the same could be said of Jaguar and Bugatti, too. No. What makes the Ferrari extraordinary is the influence and spirit not of faceless multinational committees with computer chips for brains, but of one man — its founder, incessant goad and for 41 years the company's resident tyrant, Enzo Ferrari himself. And this influence and spirit is being traduced.

Ferrari died on Sunday, August 14, last year. He was 90. He had been a journalist, a racing driver, a team manager for Alfa Romeo, and he did not start making his own cars until 1947, when he was 49. He represented absolute continuity not only for his own company but to the world: here was a man who grew up with the automobile and who, in the '80s, was still making his own cars under his own name. Above all he personified a search for excellence. He was autocratic and he could be brutal: the year after the American Phil Hill won the world Grand Prix championship driving for Ferrari, Enzo told the press that Hill wasn't trying hard enough any more. Hill hasn't got over it yet. "When Ferrari wins, it's the cars," ran the word on the street. "When they lose, it's the drivers."

Yet none of his drivers doubted his commitment to making the finest fast cars in the world, and in time the rest of us, who cared passionately about cars but would never be able to afford one of his, came to realize it, too. The stories helped, of course. Once, legend has it, his workers rose in wrath and demanded more pay. Their leaders bearded Ferrari in his office. He heard them out, then reached into a desk drawer, pulled out a revolver and pushed it across the table, handle first. Cracking a tear, he explained that he would never, could never, line his pockets at their expense, that they should know by now that he lived only for the car, that if he bowed to their demands it would mean the end of everything they had worked for, that if they didn't believe him life was no longer worth living and they should pull the trigger right away, because it was loaded. And so they left him, responding to good drama as Italians do, even if none of them believed the bit about it being loaded.

From time to time he was asked why there was no Ferrari museum to house the history of such passionately conceived works of art. "My museum," he would reply grandly, "is on the streets." And in a way it is, though less than it was and certainly not in the way Enzo Ferrari would have wanted. Something has happened in the last three or four years that runs counter to everything *il Gran Vecchio* stood for. Collectors — few of them true autophiles, many of them American and Japanese — are treating them as their own works of art, investments to be hoarded like van Goghs until the right auction comes along. Now Ferrari was quite proud enough to enjoy anyone calling his cars works of art, the end product of one man's vision, but he designed them as works of art to be worked hard — flogged, if that was what you wanted to do with them. Ferraris are the essence of drivers' cars, and the notion of rich market manipulators dealing with them as no more than market pawns would have been anathema to him.

Jake Silberberg of Toronto is the director of the central Canada region (about 90 members) of the Ferrari Club of America, and he is none too happy about the turn of events, either. "Americans tend to over-restore their cars," he says. "They have developed this obsessive need to make their Ferraris perfect, in fact much more perfect than they were in the first place. I say this for a fact — I've been a judge at Ferrari meets."

But after the meet, anyway, surely these Ferraris get driven home? If only they were: that would have fulfilled part of the drive-and-race philosophy on which the marque was built. Instead, these over-restored marvels, any part of which inside or out could be used as an operating table by brain surgeons, are loaded onto a covered trailer, tenderly cossetted with protective blankets, and towed home at 50 km/h. What absurdity! What ignominy!

"I don't really understand it," says Silberberg sadly. As a Ferrari nut since the age of 10 he is very much a driver's man: he could not afford a Ferrari until he was 35, and then he bought a 1962 250 GTE. It was as close to an entry Ferrari as he could find, and in those pre-berserk days it cost him $20,000. "It was February 28, 1981, a particularly snowless day, and as I drove home I let it out a bit... and that exhaust note was there... and I had tears in my eyes." Silberberg, clearly, is not a trophy hunter. "I can only assume trophies are a form of ego massage. But you can only get so many trophies, and after the rec room's full, what next?"

What's next seems to be an ever greater escalation in second-hand Ferrari prices — particularly those made under Enzo's aegis. These prices have already vaulted over those fetched by Bugattis (the make most closely akin to Ferrari in intention and spirit) and at their current rate of expansion may soon blast into the van Gogh stratosphere. Since Bugattis and van Goghs are no longer made, Ferrari S.p.A., which have been Fiat-controlled since 1969 and are very much a vibrant concern, seem to have finessed the hoary criterion that death is the only sure-fire route to price-escalation. Or had it finessed for them.

The big prices go for the two-seaters, naturally closest to the *pur sang* of the racetrack: biggest of all are going for the 250 GTO, an exquisitely sinewy example of the carmaking art of which Ferrari made exactly 39 between 1962 and '64.

"In the early '70s you could have picked up one of them off a lot for around $15,000 U.S.," says Silberberg. "Until a couple of years ago 38 had been located and restored. Everyone knew where the 39th was: it was lying about, for at least 10 years, in a farmer's field in one of the eastern states. Finally he sold it, for more than $2 million. But that was 1987. Going price now is at least $3 million."

The collector who wants to keep track of these things must subscribe to the *Ferrari Market Letter*, a fortnightly put out by Roush Publications in the U.S. Here he will find, for example, market averages (all in U.S. dollars) which show that a 275 GTB/4 commanding $25,000 in 1976 would fetch $850,000 today. More correctly, *last year.* And here's a private ad from an early-'89 *FML*. It's for a 1965 275 GTB Competizione, and the Florida advertiser notes helpfully: "Offers under $10 million not considered."

That rules me out by almost exactly $9.99 million. It also rules out Jake Silberberg and every other car nut who as a kid would cheerfully have taken out a contract on grandma if the payoff had been a Ferrari — any Ferrari — and he could be assured of a new identity somewhere in the midwest. One more proof that when any art form, even one so bruised and abused as the motor car, falls into the hands of the investor, the true fan will always be relegated to the rumble seat.

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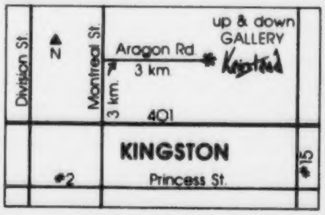

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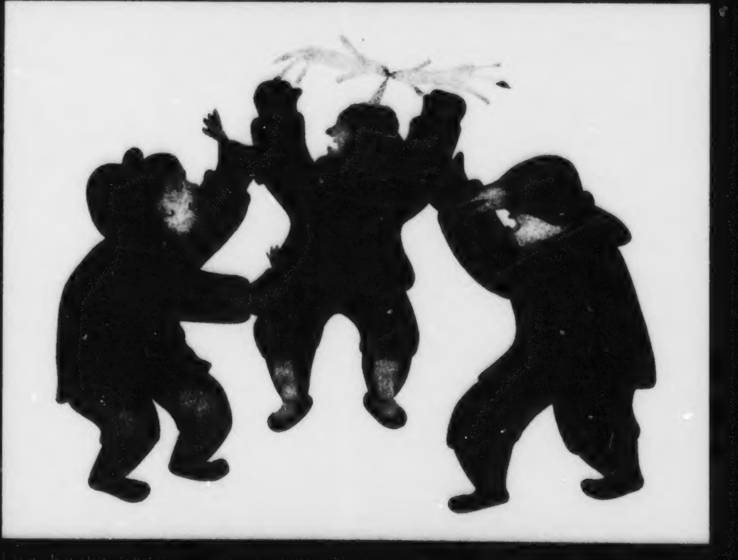

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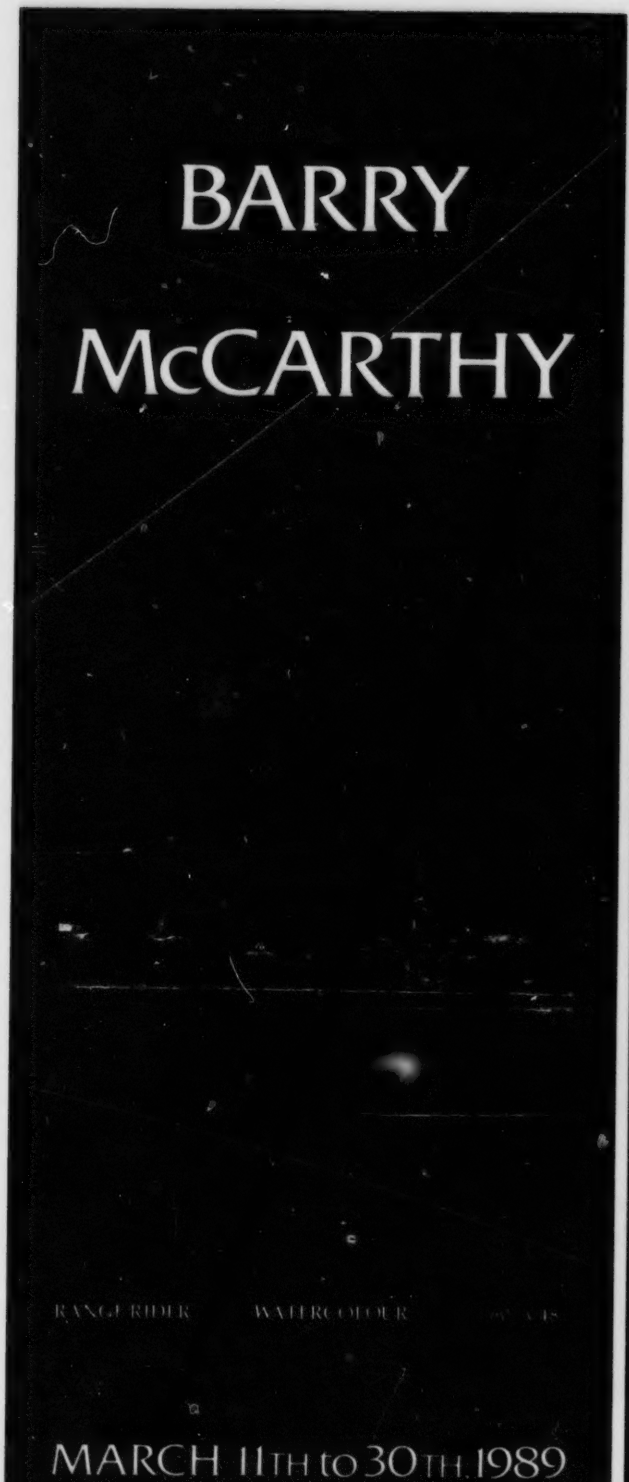

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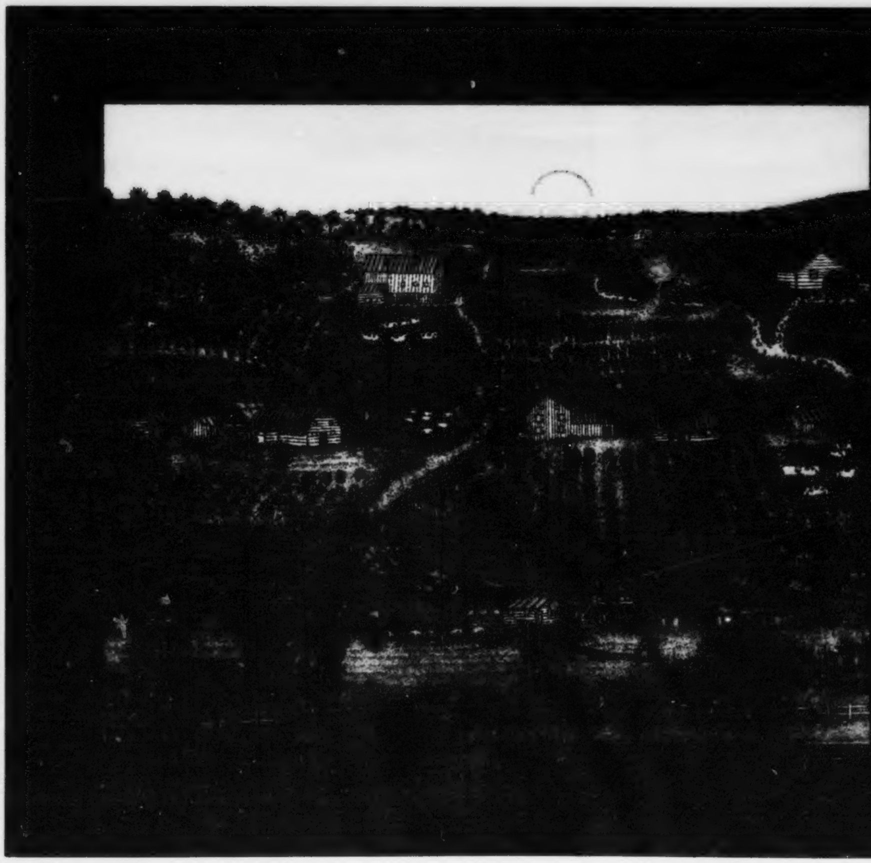

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fast forward

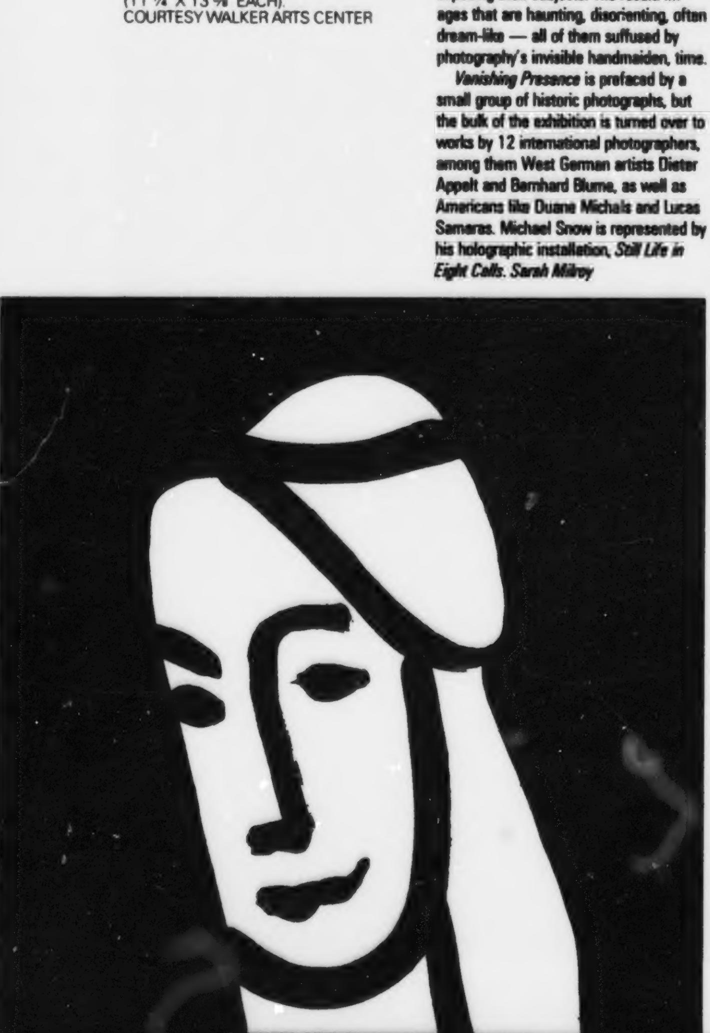
A cross-Canada checkup of people and events in the arts

Compiled by SARAH MILROY

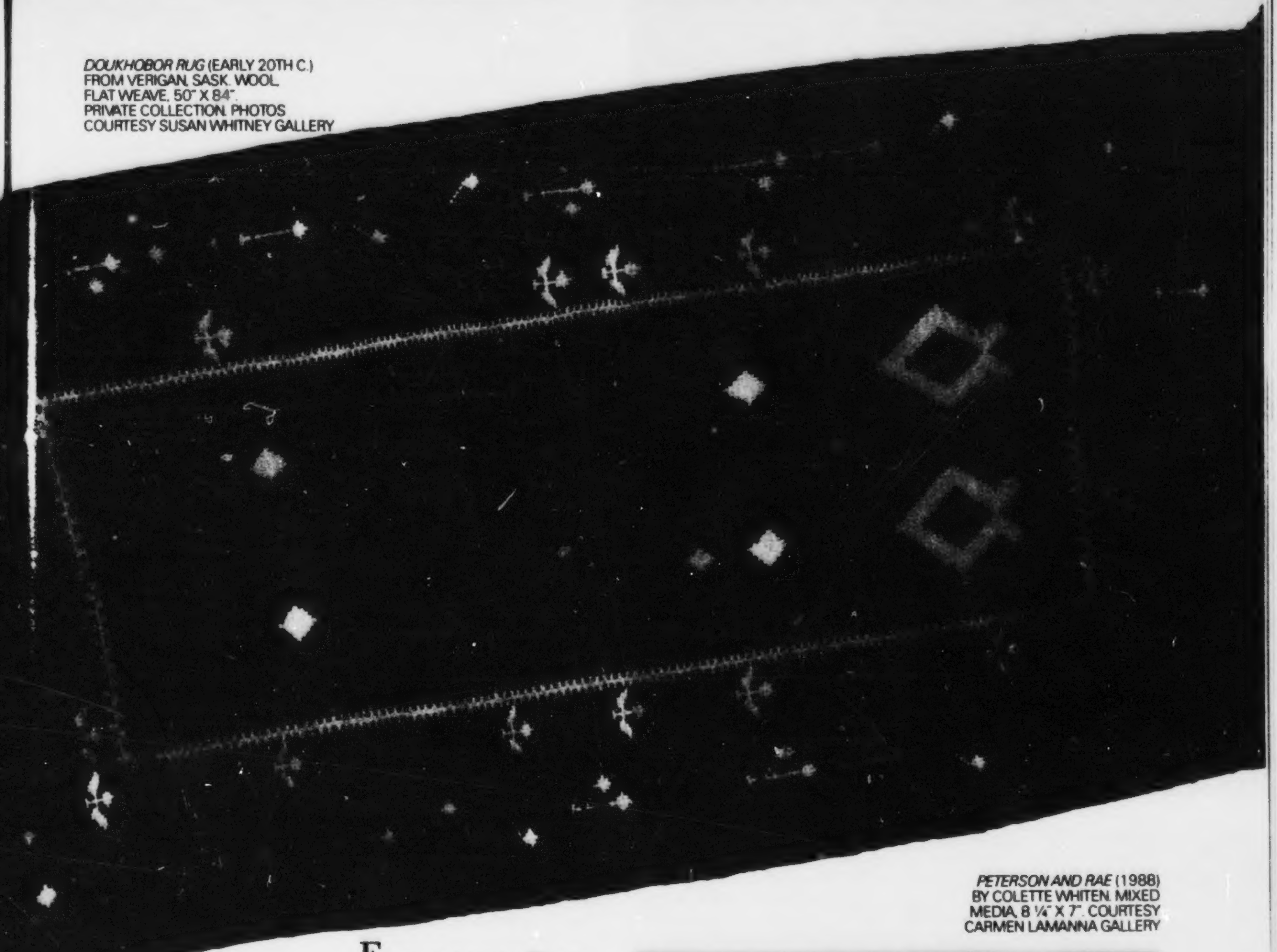
RIGHT: *DEATH COMES TO THE OLD LADY* (1969) BY DUANE MICHALS. SERIES OF FIVE PHOTOGRAPHS (11 ¼" X 13 ⅜" EACH). COURTESY WALKER ARTS CENTER

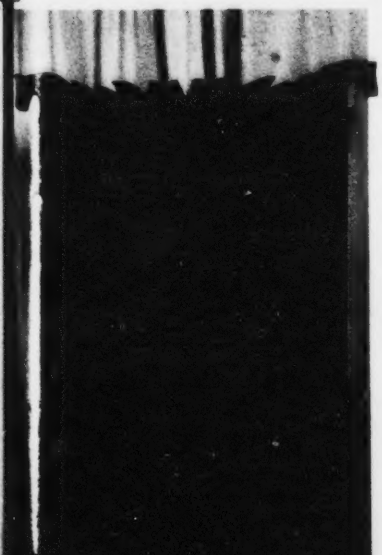
Ever since Cartier-Bresson coined the notion of the "decisive moment," people have expected a certain conclusiveness from photography. Increasingly, however, photography is coming to be seen as an indecisive art, the art of capturing a reality that is — as E.M. Forster put it — a muddle. It is this indecisive moment that the Walker Art Center's Adam Weinberg celebrates in his exhibition *Vanishing Presence*, on show at the Winnipeg Art Gallery from May 13 to July 30. These 200 images by historic and contemporary photographers from Eugène Atget to Michael Snow subtly dismantle our certainties, blurring, smudging and multiple-exposing their subjects. The result: images that are haunting, disorienting, often dream-like — all of them suffused by photography's invisible handmaiden, time.

Vanishing Presence is prefaced by a small group of historic photographs, but the bulk of the exhibition is turned over to works by 12 international photographers, among them West German artists Dieter Appelt and Bernhard Blume, as well as Americans like Duane Michals and Lucas Samaras. Michael Snow is represented by his holographic installation, *Still Life in Eight Calls*. *Sarah Milroy*



DOUKHOBOR RUG (EARLY 20TH C.)
FROM VERIGAN, SASK. WOOL
FLAT WEAVE, 50" X 84".
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTOS
COURTESY SUSAN WHITNEY GALLERY

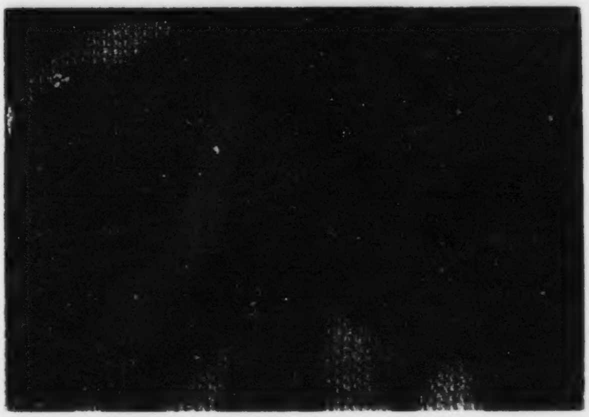




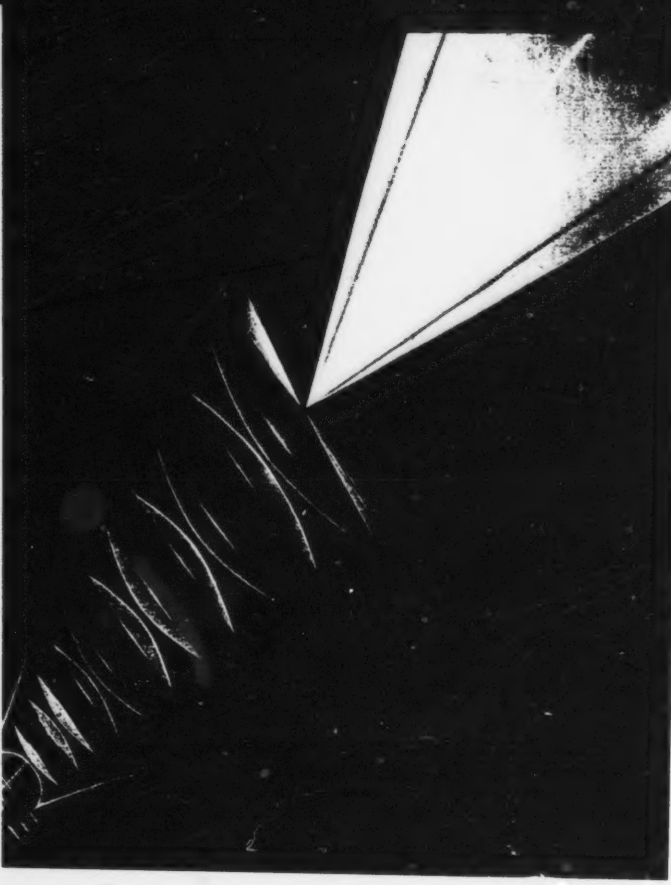
For a decade, interest in Western Canadian ethnic furniture has been growing in Vancouver. Young by Eastern standards, such material (mostly 20th-century) began to surface in the late 1960s and early '70s at farm auctions and local dealers' shops. Collectors came to value the sculptural presence, vivid colors and aged patina of furnishings rescued from attics, sheds and chicken coops. Today good pieces are getting harder to find. Jim Shockey Folkart Interiors in Vancouver has attracted faithful clients throughout his six years in business, although his major customer these days is American designer Ralph Lauren, who buys the handmade, painted wooden furniture in bulk to enhance the look of his Polo Country stores in the U.S., Canada and Japan. Fans in Central Canada — and elsewhere — would also do well to visit the Susan Whitney Gallery in Regina, where *Made in the West*, Whitney's third show with Saskatchewan's only full-time ethnic furniture dealer, Lindsay Anderson, runs to March 21. *Nancy Tousley*

UKRAINIAN CUPBOARD (EARLY 20TH C.)
FROM KAMSACK, SASK. PAINTED PINE.
COLLECTION OF SUSAN WHITNEY AND
STEPHEN ARSENYCH.

PETERSON AND RAE (1988)
BY COLETTE WHITEN. MIXED
MEDIA, 8 ¼" X 7". COURTESY
CARMEN LAMANNA GALLERY



For many contemporary artists, photography has become as basic a material for art production as paint, plaster and wood. In 1986, Colette Whiten exhibited a series of needlepoint works based on newspaper photographs (primarily from *The Globe and Mail*) and supported on wooden, lectern-like stands. To a public accustomed to her previous work — castings of the human body and the painful-looking wooden casting apparatus she also displayed — her labors with needle and thread on a small piece of cloth may have come as something of a surprise. Like the castings, however, these new images of politicians and of social and political disorder are a permanent record of people or events, revealed not in the split second of the photograph but through the painstaking, detailed labor of minute cross-stitches not unlike the screened microdots of newspaper pictures. From March 4 to 30 at the Carmen Lamanna Gallery in Toronto. *Elke Town*



DYNAMITE (1922) BY K. REDKO
OIL ON CANVAS, 24 ½" X 18 ½"
COLLECTION OF GEORGE COSTAKIS
COURTESY MUSEE DES BEAUX-ARTS

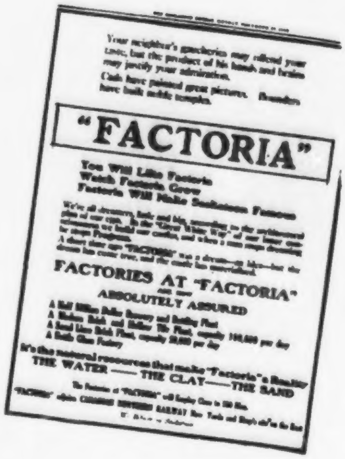
George Costakis spent his entire career working for the Canadian embassy in Moscow, where, as a Russian native, he was head of Soviet personnel. But Canadians know him now for his astounding collection of Russian and Soviet avant-garde art. Although he started out collecting Western Old Masters, he quickly became passionate about the art that he was seeing around him. "When I put avant-garde work next to my Old Masters," recalls Costakis, "the dark windows seemed to be open wide and the sun came in."

Costakis made more than a thousand acquisitions, most of them from spouses, heirs and friends of the Russian avant-garde. This collection has been seen in Canada before: in 1982 the National Gallery mounted an edited version of a touring Guggenheim show. But the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' show — which opens on March 17 and runs until May 21 — is not only much larger (about 240 paintings and works on paper, plus one sculpture) but also packs some surprises. In addition to the expected works by Tatlin, Rodchenko, Popova, Malevich et al., *The Russian and Soviet Avant-garde: The George Costakis Collection* includes works by artists who have — until now — escaped the Artnost limelight of the late '80s. Many fall outside of the Constructivist-Suprematist mold, among them figurative expressionist painter Nikritin or Redko, whose visual hymns to technology and the future bespeak his association with the Electro-Organism group, one of the Soviet avant-garde's shorter-lived manifestations.

Costakis now lives in Greece, and has already donated a healthy chunk of his collection to the Tretiakov Gallery in Moscow. Whether an equally healthy chunk of this collection will come to rest in Canada is still up in the air, but judging by the scale of this show, one can only suppose that the MMFA is hoping for the best. *Sarah Milroy*

From May 5 to June 18, The Power Plant in Toronto will offer a well-deserved mid-career retrospective of selected works (1979-89) by Robert Fones. Fones is well-known to the local art community through his biannual exhibitions at the Carmen Lamanna Gallery, but he has received little attention outside Toronto. In part, this neglect is due to the fact that his work is conceptually subtle and formally diverse. Few viewers are instantly attracted to his sparse aesthetic and seemingly extra-artistic themes. Like many of the artists who joined the Carmen Lamanna Gallery in the 1970s, Fones was part of a dynamic community of artists, poets and writers from London, Ontario, who were actively engaged in redefining the parameters of contemporary art. Themes of archeology, topography and a sense of place remain constant in the work of Robert Fones. The earliest piece in the exhibition, for example, is the *Butter Models* of 1979. This multimedia installation consists of over 150 wooden blocks cut and sanded to the size of one-pound chunks of butter. Each is covered in a wrapper from one of the many creameries that, at one time, dotted the Southern Ontario countryside. In later works, Fones uses maps, road signs and landscape photographs to further explore the notion of place and its representation. In these works we are encouraged to acknowledge the distinction between the physical/natural reality of a given locale and the conditions that determine its cultural designation as a site. *Bruce Grenville*

February 4, 1913: "Fearlessly Facing the Future, Furnishes Financial Freedom for Fathers who erect Fortifications which will Forever Free their Families from the wolf's Ferocious Fangs!" The town of Factoria, a Canadian Novahuta, was planned for the outskirts of Saskatoon. Of course, it was never built. But co-curator Matthew Teitelbaum was intrigued all the same, and out of his interest in "The Wonder City" grew the Mendel Art Gallery's enormous spring exhibition, *Saskatoon Imagined: Art and Architecture in the Wonder City* running until April 2. The show is broken into four parts: Saskatoon as it was planned (but not built), Saskatoon as it used to be, Saskatoon as it is, and Saskatoon as a city of the imagination. This last section will include works made for the show by 10 Saskatchewan artists, among them such established figures as Eli Bornstein, David Thauberger and Rick Gorenko, as well as younger artists like Clark Henderson and Jim Graham. *Sarah Milroy*



Your neighbor's gaucheries may offend your taste, but the product of his hands and brains may justify your admiration.

Cads have painted great pictures. Bounders have built noble temples.

"FACTORIA"

You Will Like Factoria
Watch Factoria Grow
Factoria Will Make Saskatoon Famous

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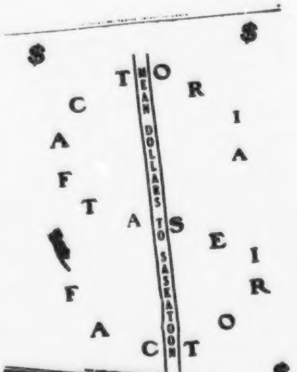
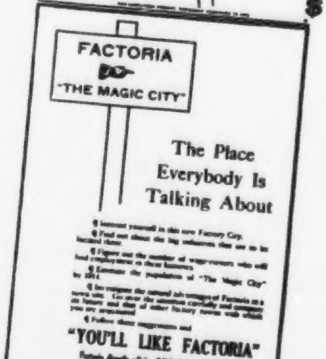
THE WATER —— THE CLAY —— THE SAND



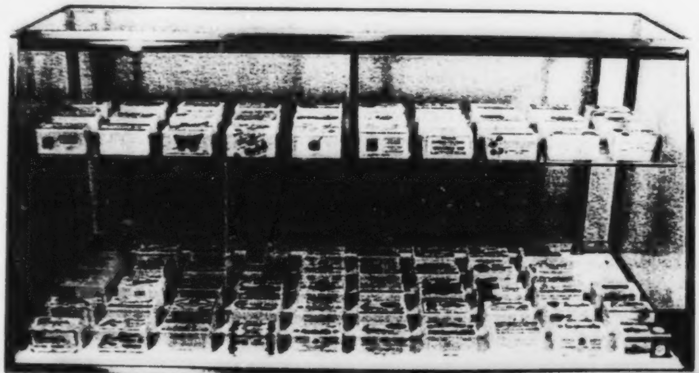


FACTORIA
"THE MAGIC CITY"

The Place Everybody Is Talking About

"YOU'LL LIKE FACTORIA"

ABOVE: ADS FROM *THE SASKATOON PHOENIX* (1912). COURTESY OF MENDEL ART GALLERY



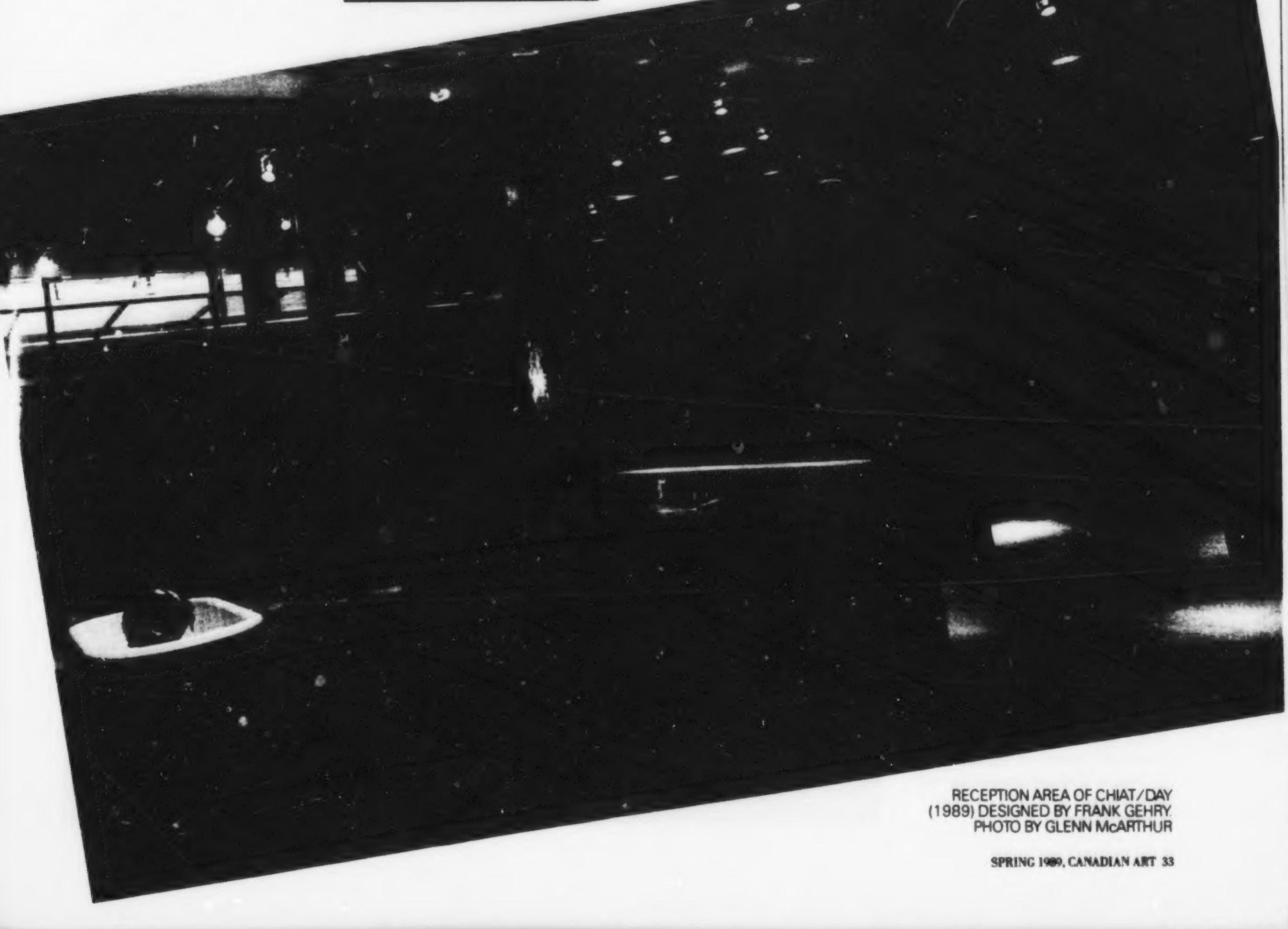
LEFT: *BUTTER MODELS* (1979), ROBERT FONES
DISPLAY CASE, MAPLE BLOCK, PARCHMENT, INK, CARDBOARD
44 ¼" X 64 ½" X 28 ¾"
COURTESY OF CARMEN LAMANNA GALLERY

Frank Gehry, Toronto boy made good, has finally built in his home town — not an opera house, alas, but an interior for Chiat/Day inc. Advertising, a Los Angeles-based company that has leased two floors of office space, one now complete, at Harbourfront (his associate architect in Toronto is David Fujiwara). Gehry moved to L.A. while a teenager, but he harbors vivid memories of his Canadian childhood. Some have surfaced overtly, as in a sculpture of a lead-scaled fish inside a claw-footed bathtub — Gehry played with a live carp from Kensington Market every Thursday before it became gefilte fish — and more subtly, as atmosphere and metaphor.

The plan is symmetrical: central lobby and conference room, with plywood boxes — "conference bubble" and service area — to either side, and wrapped around these, along the perimeter of the space, the workstations. The poetry comes from Gehry's choice of materials — plywood, logs, dolomite, wired-mesh glass, aluminum, lead sheeting, felt — and the way he's shaped and layered them, skillfully subverting symmetry to create an environment both simple and complex, functional and mnemotic, evocative of a Canadian type: the Lodge. *Adele Freedman*

William S. Burroughs, novelist (*Naked Lunch, Place of Dead Roads*), ex-junkie, yage-queen, dank stand-up comedian in the jungle of cities, postmodern cut-up, sallow desiccated high priest of the Church of Discontinuity, now makes paintings. The best known are the creepy shotgun paintings composed from afar (in mordant echo of his William Tellish shooting of the apple of his eye, his wife, Joan Vollmer, in 1951) by blasting away at a hunk of board (broad question mark). The others are works on paper, which attempt to be planar equivalents to the collage, stencil, fold-in, cut-up, mask-out techniques of his Third Mind prose. Burroughs' first exhibition in Canada opens at Montreal's Oboro Gallery April 22. A second Burroughs exhibition opens April 25 at Toronto's Cold City Gallery and runs until May 24. *Gary Michael Dault*

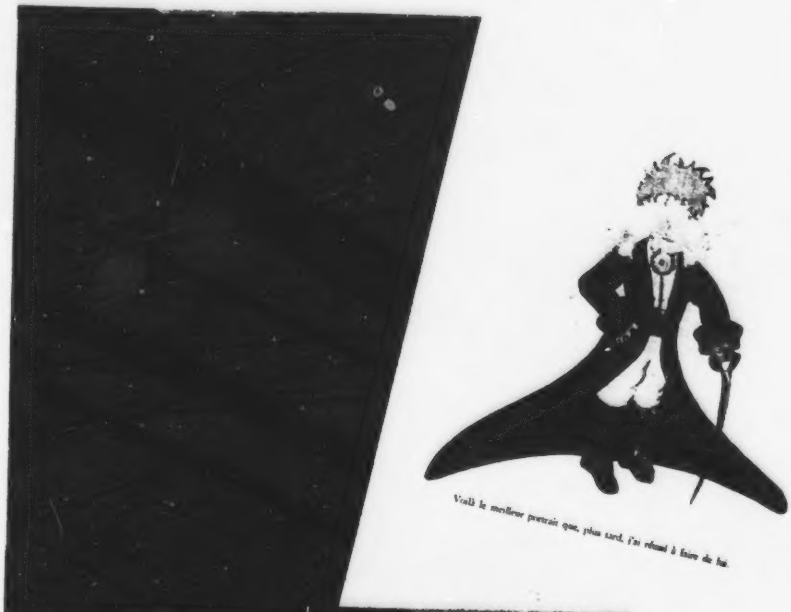
LEFT: WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS.
ABOVE: *10 GAUGE CITY* (1988)
BY WILLIAM S.BURROUGHS.
MIXED MEDIA ON PLYWOOD. 39" X 15".
COURTESY THE OBORO GALLERY



RECEPTION AREA OF CHIAT/DAY
(1989) DESIGNED BY FRANK GEHRY.
PHOTO BY GLENN McARTHUR

Montreal artist Geneviève Cadieux usually works in a large format. Her images, whether projected on walls or lit from behind as gigantic photographic transparencies, are as concerned with the implications of scale and projection as they are with subject matter. But in her most recent project — a fundraiser for Montreal's Oboro Gallery — she has adapted her work to book size. Cadieux is the third artist, after Betty Goodwin and Geoffrey James, to publish a limited edition work on behalf of the Oboro Gallery, one of Montreal's most active alternate galleries. Only 60 copies of the book were printed, each selling for $400 and available through the Oboro Gallery and Cadieux's commercial dealer, Galerie René Blouin. Cadieux's book has its roots in the artist's monumental work from 1987, *La blessure d'une cicatrice ou les Anges* (*The Wound of a Scar or the Angels*) — exhibited during the past two years in Berlin, Sydney, Toronto and Montreal — which compares two nine-foot-tall images borrowed from Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* and E.J. Bellocq's *Storyville Portraits* of prostitutes. Underneath, Cadieux has inscribed a line from *The Little Prince*: "Here is the best portrait that, later, I was able to make of him."

In both images, the faces of each figure have been defaced, the storybook portrait ripped by a child in the Cadieux family and the Storyville portrait scratched out, most likely by the photographer himself. "I was interested in the tension between the two images, which are portraits but in which the central element, the face, is now missing," says Cadieux. "They raised interesting questions for me about personal identity, as well as representation of the human figure in both drawing and photography." *Stephen Godfrey*

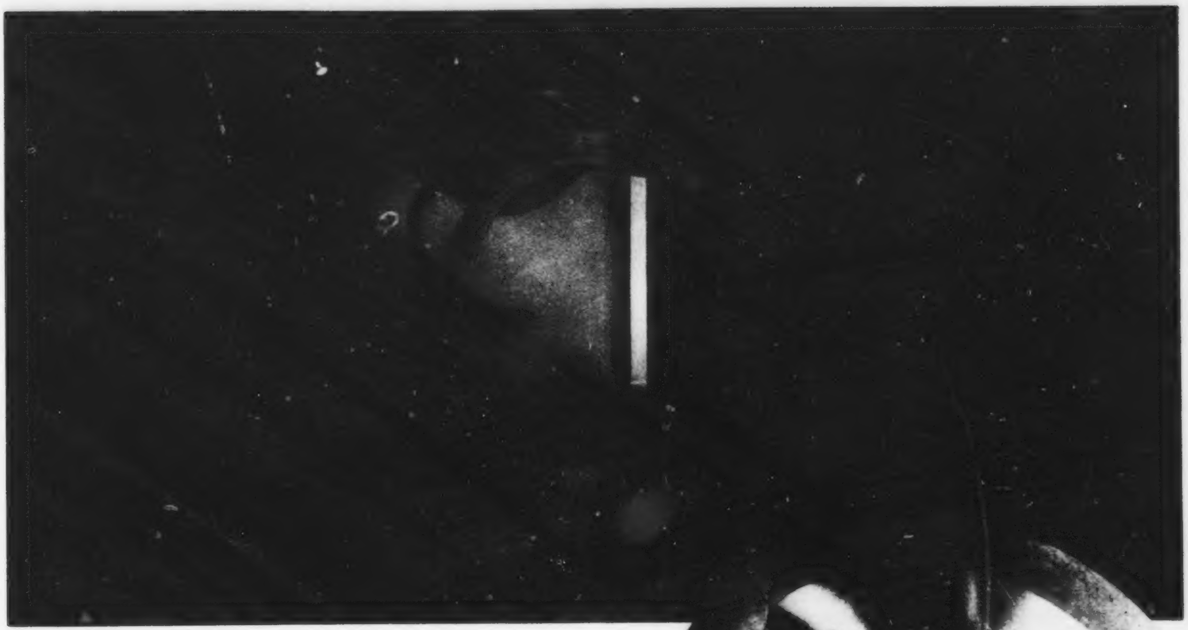

Voilà le meilleur portrait que, plus tard, j'ai réussi à faire de lui.

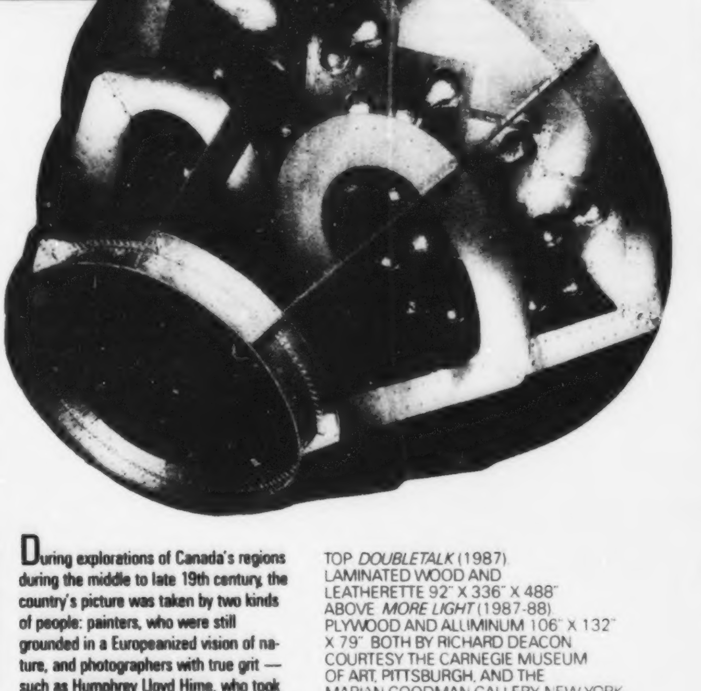
LEFT: COVER OF *STORYVILLE PORTRAITS: LE PETIT PRINCE* (1988) BY GENEVIEVE CADIEUX COLLAGE, 25 (9 ¼" X 11") PAGES, EDITION OF 60 ABOVE: PAGES 16 AND 17

Casetta in Canada (*The Little House in Canada*), a popular Italian song of yesteryear, expresses the pervasive romantic dream of life in a house set apart from urban surroundings. Those with narrower options may seek the dream on the edge of the city in suburbia or within the town itself, even if the margin of "nature" is reduced to a few feet of lawn hugging the foundations. This acceptance of shrinking expectations also applies to the houses themselves. Many reflect the idea of the home as castle, manifest as miniature versions of Palladian villas, English baronial mansions, French châteaux or Spanish haciendas, which, pathetically or touchingly (depending on your view), populate the synthetic Edens we call the suburbs.

It is the theme of the isolated dwelling and the importance of the suburb in 20th-century life that the new curator of the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, Bill Jeffries, has chosen for his first exhibition. To interpret the idea behind the title *Some Detached Houses* (March 29 to April 22), Jeffries has selected a group of 10 artists — Margaret Naylor, Nancy Shaw, Bill Jones, Robin Collyer, Greg Snider, Todd Davis, Amy Jones, Robert Linsley, Dan Graham and Warren Murfitt — many of whom have created new work for this show.
Abraham Rogatnick

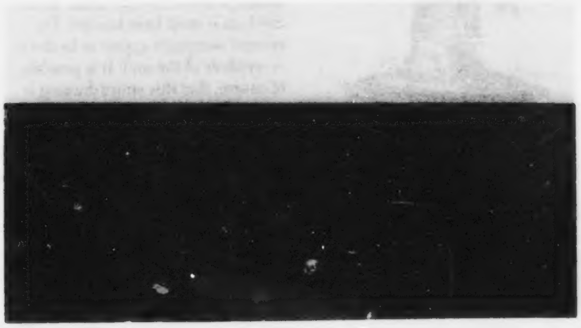
BELOW: *MUNICIPAL SUBSTATIONS (CAMERA TESTS)* (1988) BY ROBIN COLLYER. COURTESY ROBIN COLLYER/CARMEN LAMANNA GALLERY





Richard Deacon's sculptures look like a cross between '50s product design, the riveted surfaces of a Lancaster (Deacon's father was an RAF pilot) and something from a biology textbook (chapter heading: Reproductive Function in Plant Life). In short, they marry a sense of biomorphic form with a compulsion toward fastidious, quasi-industrial fabrication. Deacon, who is British, in fact calls himself a fabricator, not a sculptor, and it is his desire to reduce sculpture to the literal terms of its making that allies him with his avowed intellectual forbear Donald Judd. Also like Judd, Deacon is a master of materials — aluminum, linoleum, cloth, sheet metal, wood, corrugated tin. Hovering just shy of representation, Deacon's forms gather up space in their luxurious chambers, evocatively reconsidering the relationship between the natural and the man-made. At the Art Gallery of Ontario from April 8 to June 4, *Richard Deacon* was curated by John Caldwell for the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. *Sarah Milroy*

TOP *DOUBLETALK* (1987)
LAMINATED WOOD AND
LEATHERETTE 92" X 336" X 488"
ABOVE *MORE LIGHT* (1987-88)
PLYWOOD AND ALUMINUM 106" X 132"
X 79" BOTH BY RICHARD DEACON
COURTESY THE CARNEGIE MUSEUM
OF ART, PITTSBURGH, AND THE
MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK



During explorations of Canada's regions during the middle to late 19th century, the country's picture was taken by two kinds of people: painters, who were still grounded in a Europeanized vision of nature, and photographers with true grit — such as Humphrey Lloyd Hime, who took spare, almost abstract photographs of the prairie. ***With Lens and Brush: Images of the Western Canadian Landscape 1845-1890***, at Calgary's Glenbow Museum from April 1 to May 28, shows works by 45 artists of each persuasion. They often travelled together, documenting the territory for the folks back home. But when science met art, the latter often triumphed; the pressure was on to make the West seem awesome but nonetheless inhabitable. The show, which travels to Saskatoon, Windsor and Winnipeg in 1990, portrays, for the most part, the lands that 19th-century Canadian imaginations longed to occupy. ***Nancy Tousley***

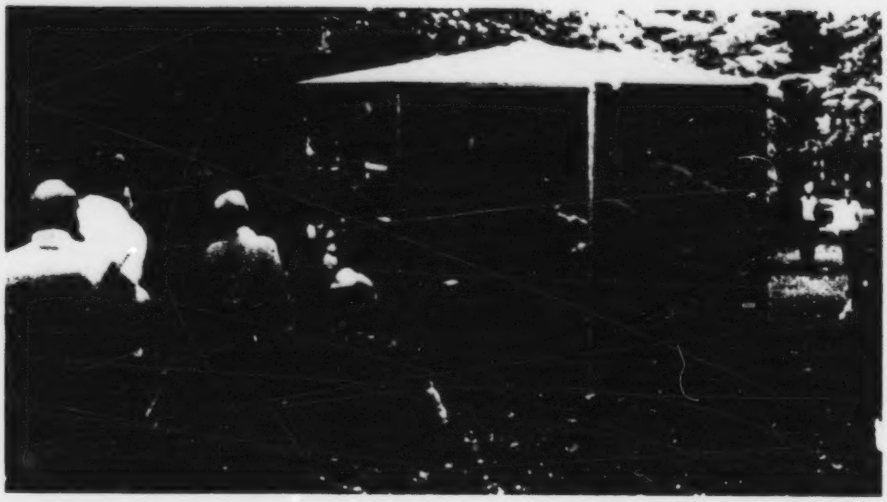
ABOVE LEFT *PRAIRIE ON BANKS OF RED RIVER LOOKING SOUTH* (1858).
HIME COLLECTION 22.
BELOW LEFT *THE PRAIRIE LOOKING WEST* (1858), HIME COLLECTION 23
COURTESY MANITOBA ARCHIVES

This year, New York artist Dan Graham extends his already lengthy association with Canada. The many sides of Graham's activities as an artist — photography, performance, video, architecture and criticism — span a 20-year period. Throughout this time, he has lectured at many art schools in Canada, beginning with the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in the early '70s (NSCAD published *Dan Graham: Video-Architecture-Television* in 1979), and has written extensively for the Montreal-based magazine *Parachute*.

Working across a wide spectrum of formats, Graham's works insistently emphasize the conditions that govern aesthetic and social order. He combines these essentially modernist concerns with a belief in the social and political value of art. From his earliest works such as *Homes for America* (1966) — parts of which will be shown in *Some Detached Houses* at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver this spring (see page 34) — Graham has addressed the problem of what keeps art and the public at arm's length (the series of photographs suggests a parallel between tract housing and the minimalist sculptural sequences of Donald Judd). Graham's observations of the rules and customs of communication give all of his works a very specific populist inflection.

Graham's work will be featured from April 22 to mid-June in a show at Montreal's Galerie Chantal Boulanger. The exhibition includes models of architectural propositions such as *Cinema* (1981) and the 1984 videotape *Rock My Religion* (in which Shaker traditions are compared with elements of '60s rock culture). As well, he is developing new work in collaboration with Montreal architect Marie-Paul MacDonald.

For more than 10 years, Graham has been known for his pavilions, an architectural form which he has sought to revise within the context of contemporary culture. In keeping with this, he is currently collaborating with Vancouver artist Jeff Wall on *A Pavilion for Children*. The model, including nine transparencies by Wall, will be exhibited this spring in Marseilles. Back in Vancouver, Graham lectures at the VAG on March 22 in addition to a stint as a visiting artist at the Emily Carr College of Art and Design. *Gary Dufour*

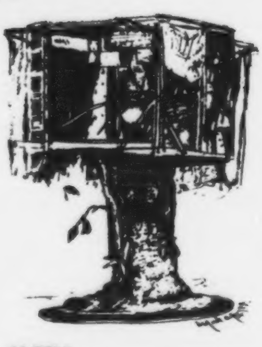


ABOVE: *OCTAGON* (1987) BY DAN GRAHAM
8 TWO-WAY MIRROR SIDE PANELS
TOPPED BY SLOPING WOODEN ROOF,
WOODEN CENTRE POLE. COURTESY
MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK

ABOVE: JACK AND DORIS SHADBOLT
PRESENT VIVA AWARDS TO CAREL
MOISEIWITSCH AND STAN DOUGLAS.
PHOTO BY ORAF

"There is a lot more work and more chances for Ontario artists than there are for B.C. artists," says venerable painter and long-time Vancouverite Jack Shadbolt. And he's right: almost $750,000 was granted to Ontario's visual artists in the last fiscal year. Compare this to the fact that no government agency gives direct funding to individual artists in B.C. and the discrepancy becomes all too clear. Both Shadbolt and his wife, writer and curator Doris Shadbolt, are aware of the lack of provincial support and have taken a step to fill the gap by creating an independent art foundation called the Vancouver Institute for the Visual Arts (VIVA). "My wife and I have both had a good life out of art in British Columbia," continues Shadbolt, "and we would like to do something in return."

B.C. artist Carel Moiseiwitsch and intermedia artist Stan Douglas were the first two recipients of the annual award, each receiving $9,000. VIVA's six-member board will also award $50,000 every five years to a B.C. artist who has been a vital contributor to the visual arts community. As well, VIVA will fund lectures and workshops by international artists. The Shadbolts plan to finance the first five years of the foundation in the hopes that tax-deductible donations from other like-minded souls will then continue to sustain the foundation's funds. *Catherine Osborne*



"While it is true that all birds partake of the general symbolism of winged animals — that is, of spirituality and the power of sublimation — some winged animals are definitely more winged, metaphysically speaking, than others. The lowly and mostly pedestrian chicken, for example, is essentially without poetic gift (except perhaps when presented to the world as Chicken Albuféra, with black truffles). Chicken coops are, in the main, as sublunary as chickens themselves. This one is a case in point. The artist's elevation of it onto a (highly naturalistic) pedestal doesn't do much to raise it from squalid to picturesque. As an outcropping of wayward, idiomatic architecture, this coop, though admirably proportioned, is as relentlessly comic as the chickens it must have housed. The current occupants appear to be doves — symbols of the soul. It is possible, of course, that this entire drawing is a metaphor: a calligraphic shorthand for the complex idea of life's most bewildering enigma — the entrapment of the buoyant, ageless soul in the mutable body." —From *Cells of Ourselves*, 50 drawings by Tony Urquhart with 50 accompanying prose-poems by Gary Michael Dault. Published by The Porcupine's Quill in May 1989, 96 pages, casebound, 8" x 9", $19.95.

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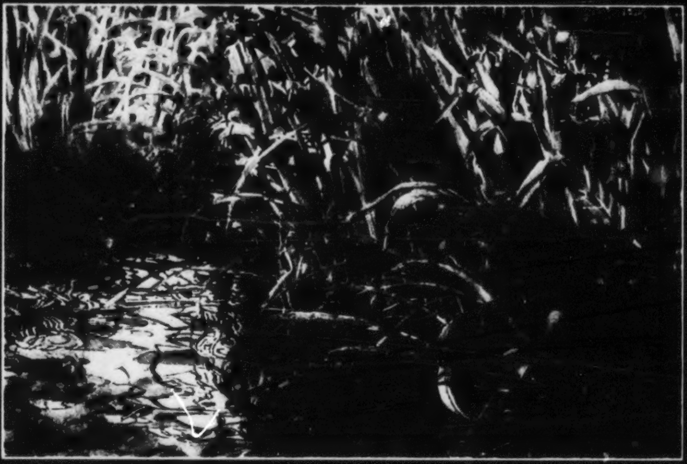
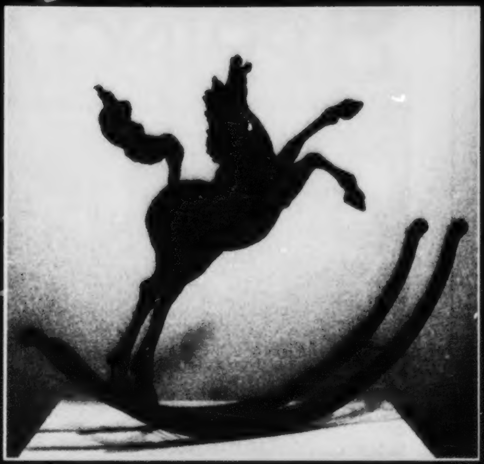


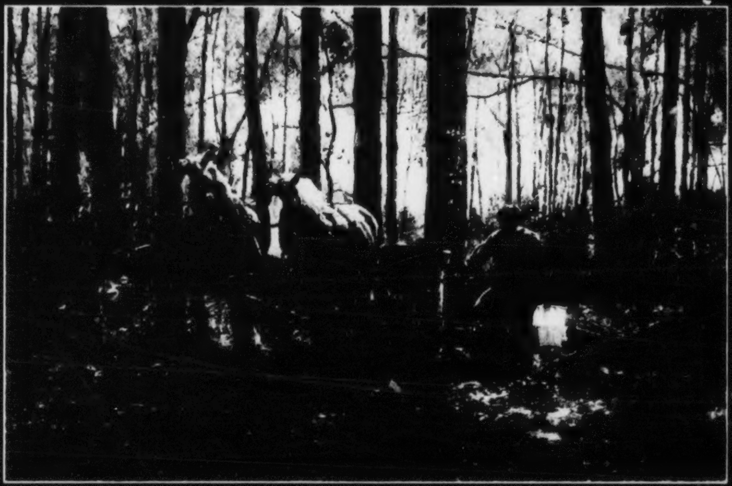
"Water Series" Michael Zarowsky



"Rocking Horse" Donald Liardi

"Dynamite" Bob Bennett

"Morning Atmosphere" MITCH



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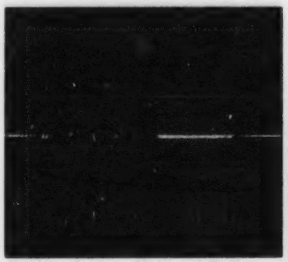

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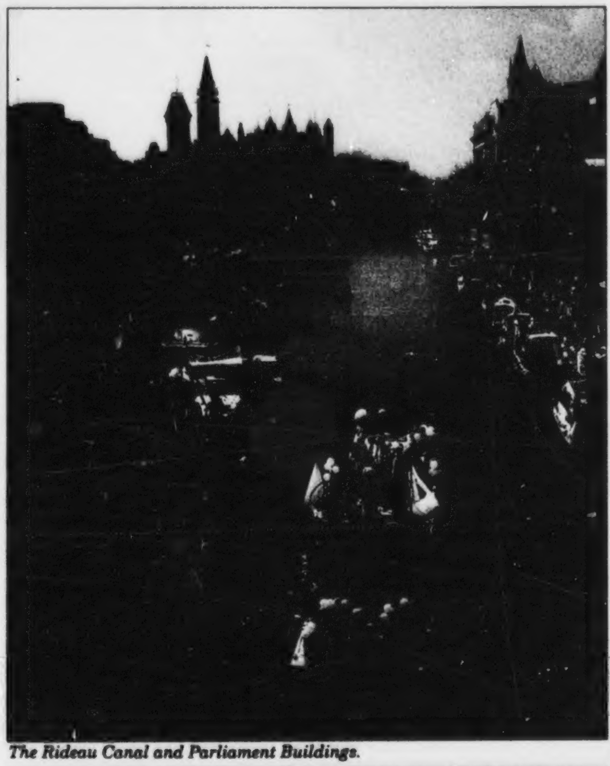

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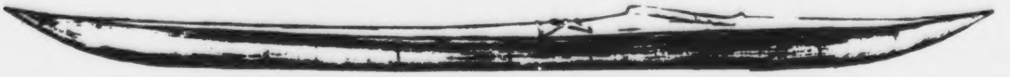

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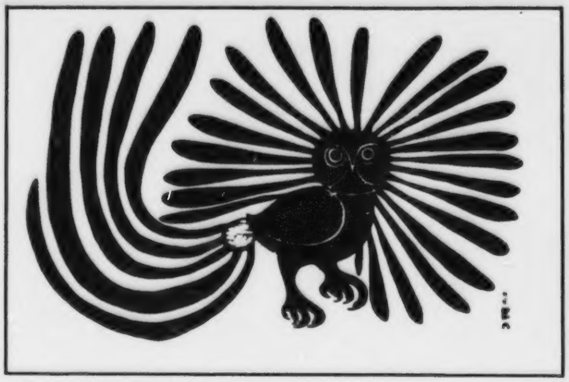

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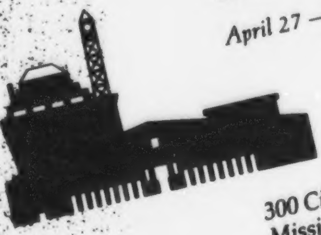

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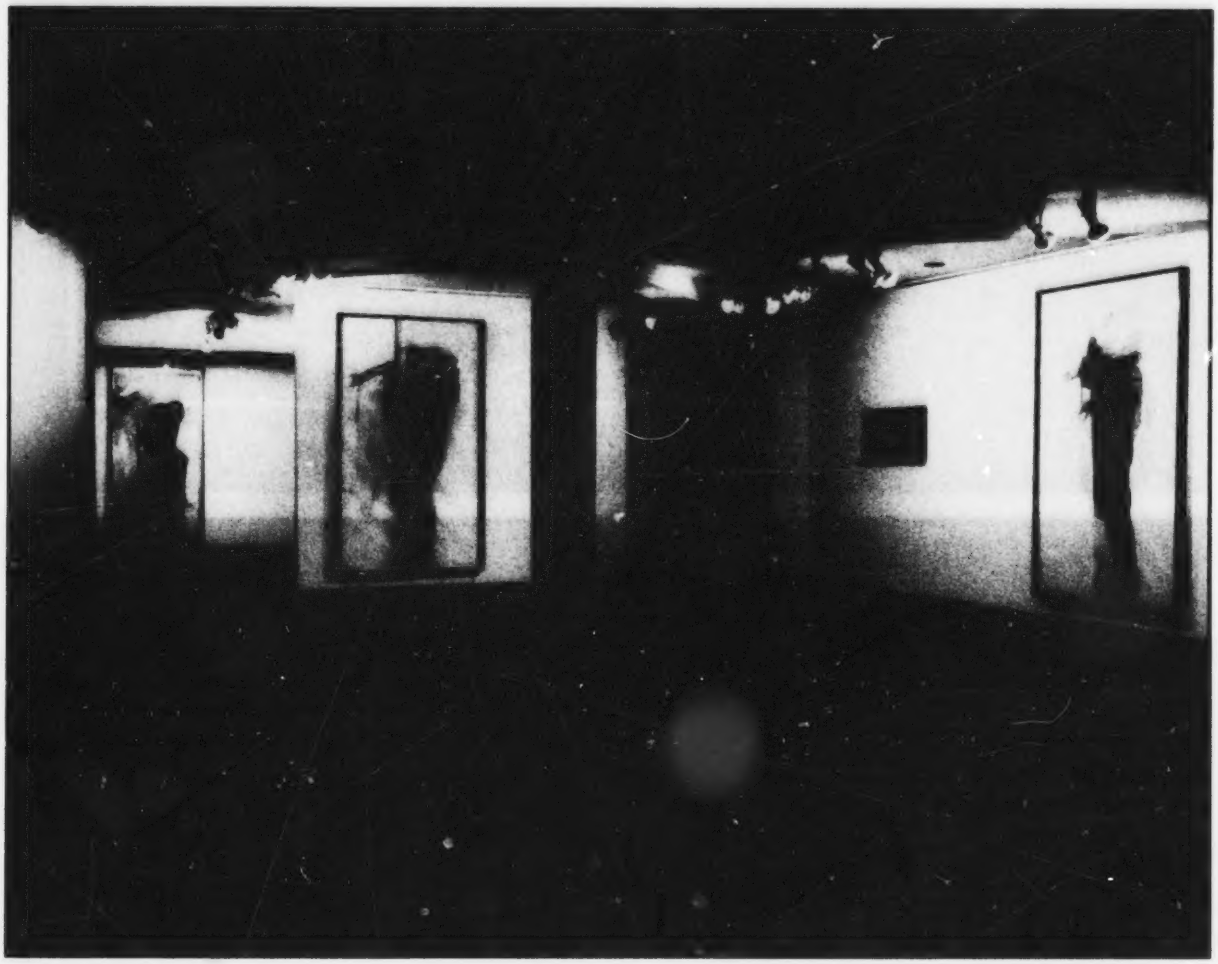

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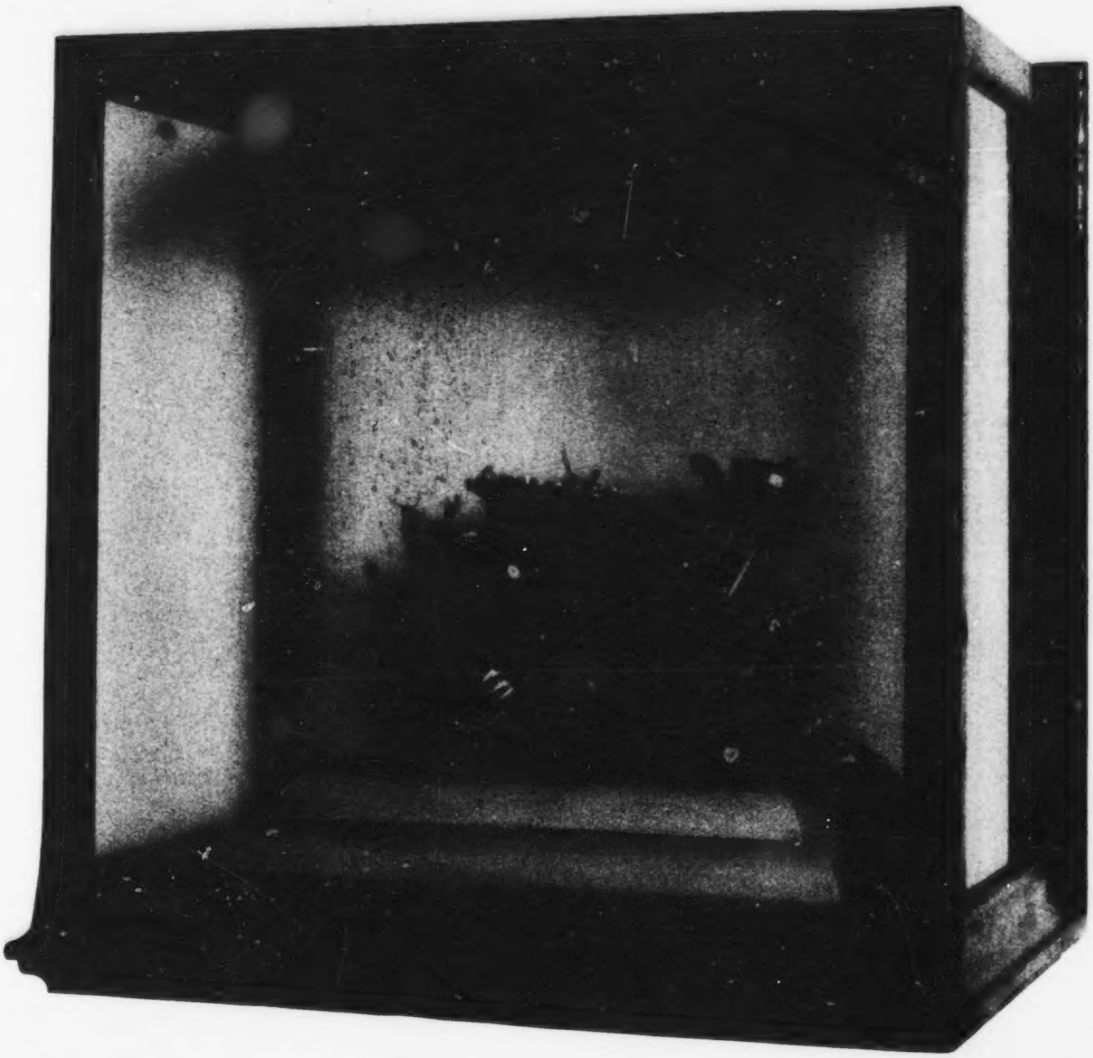

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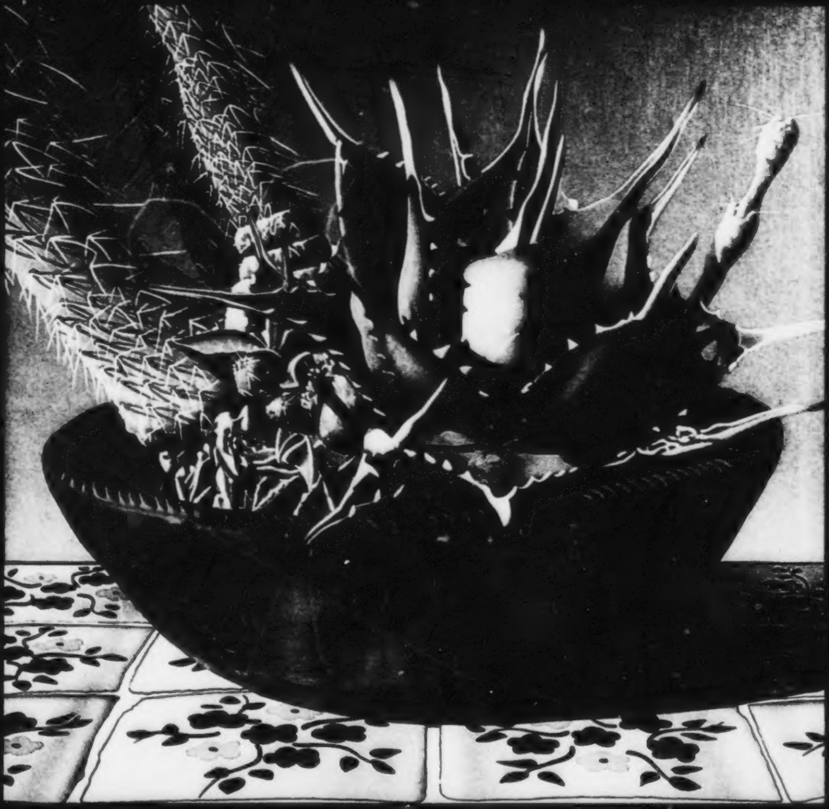

Chiapas, 1988, oil on canvas, 24 x 24

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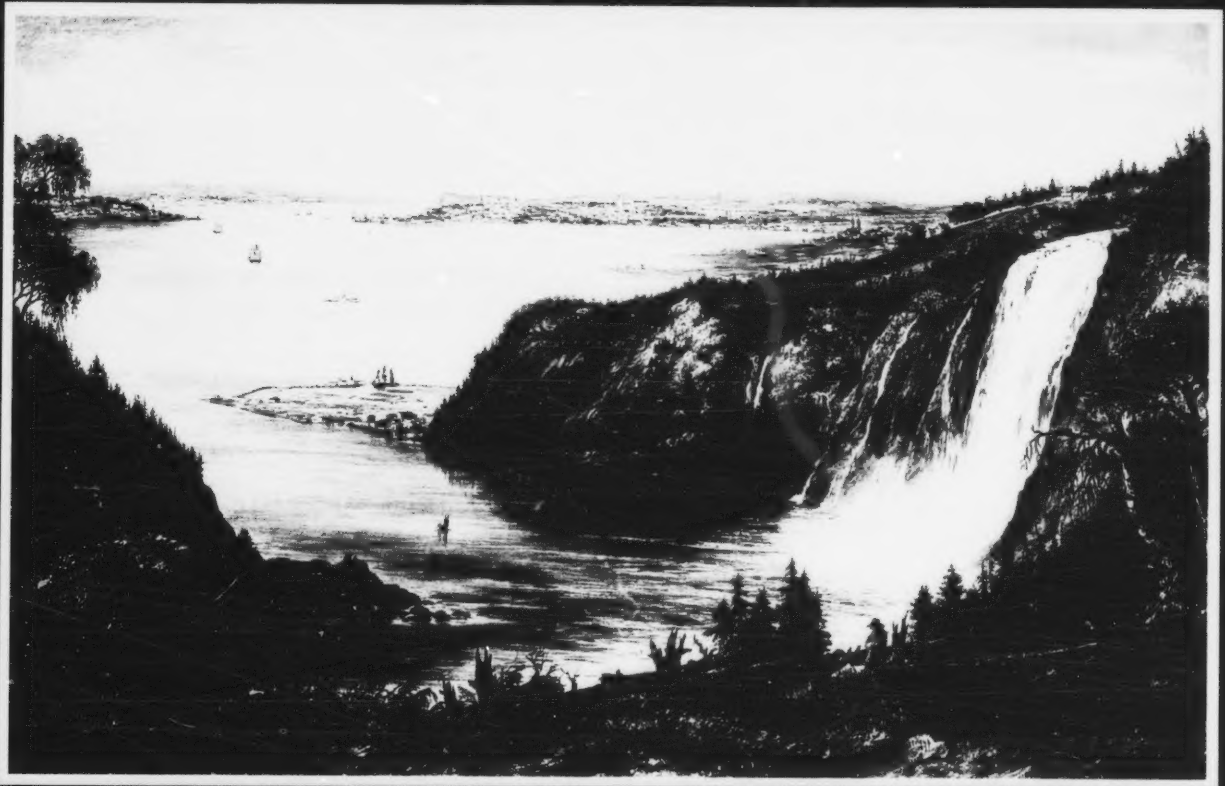

Washington Friend: "Montmorency Falls, Quebec" 1871
Watercolour, 24" × 36"

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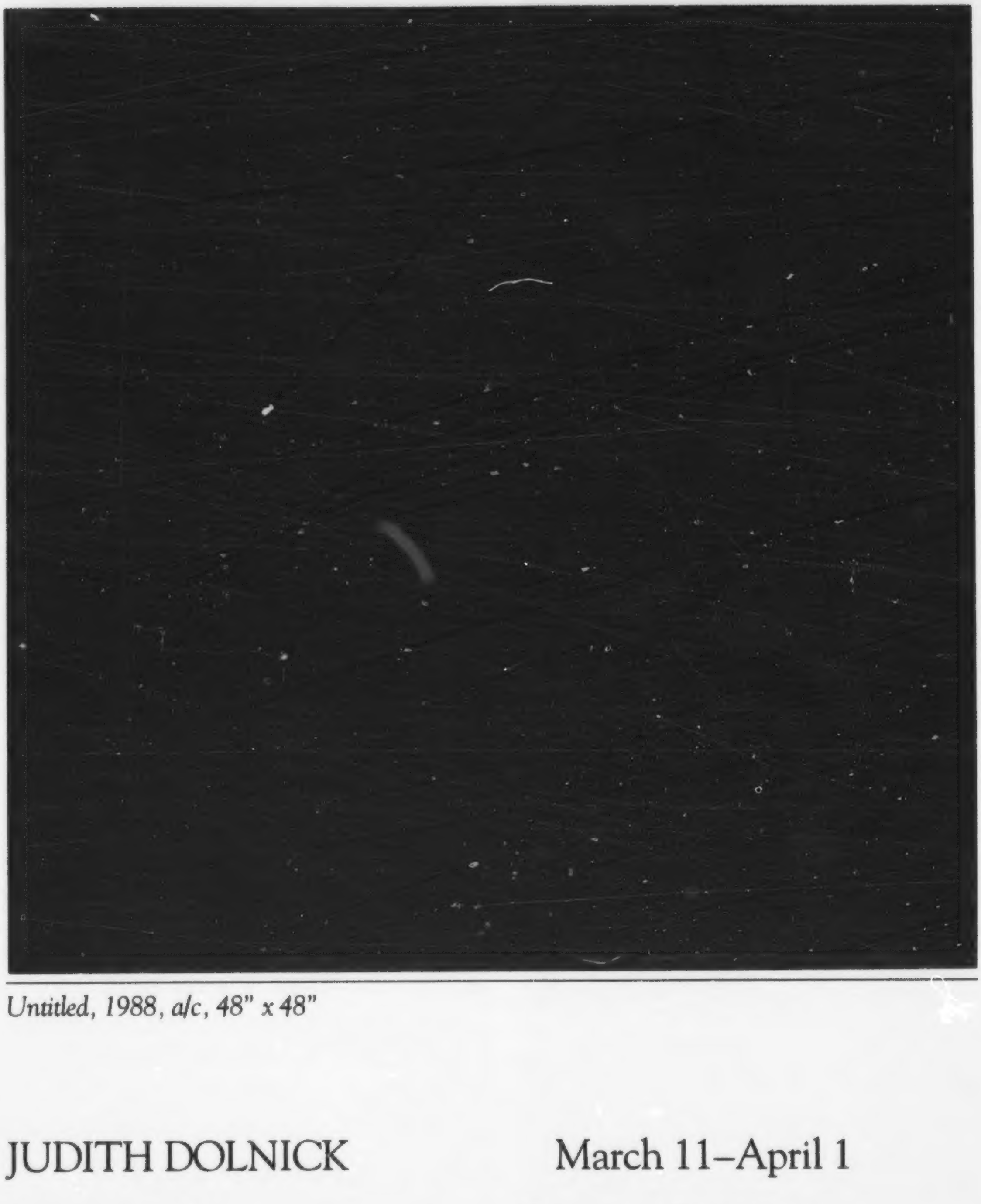

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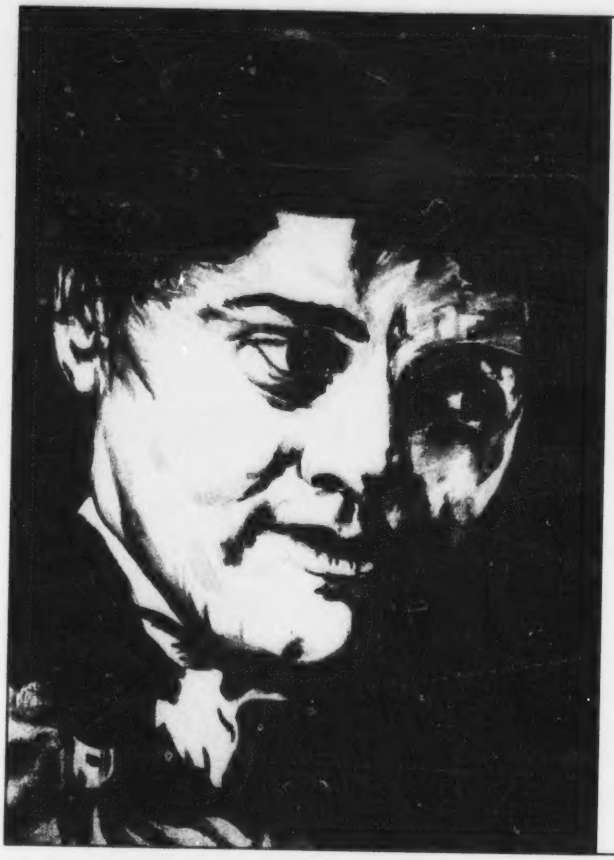

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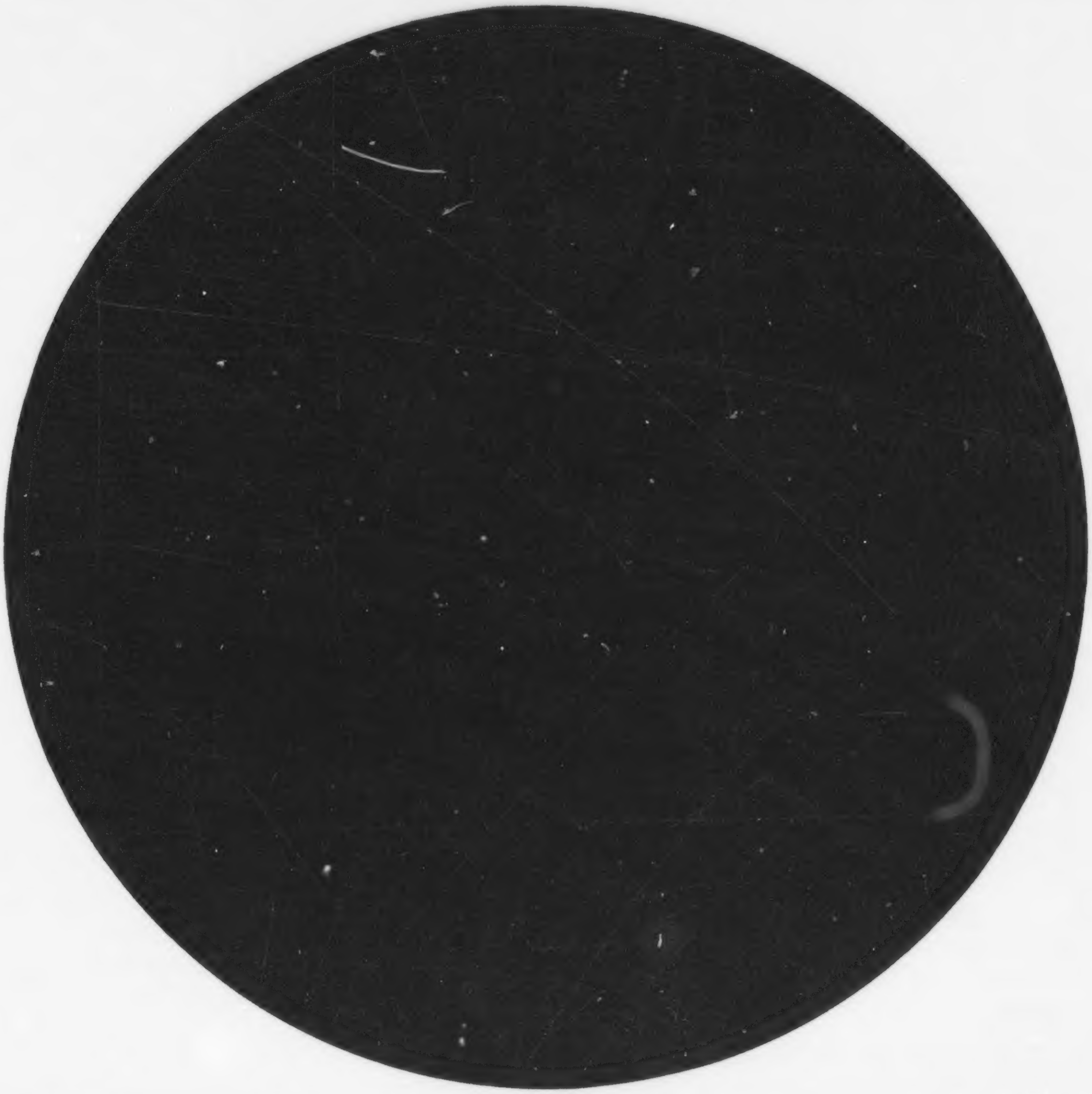

Untitled, 1988, a/c, 60" diameter

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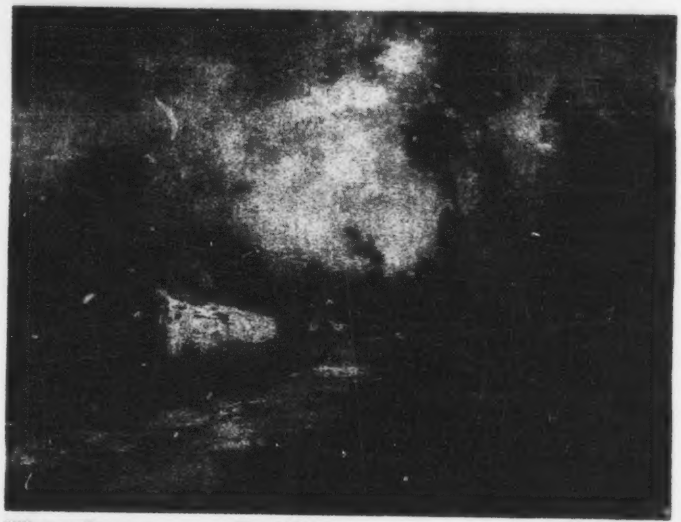

Village en Provence — Henri-Michel Lévy (Ec. Fr.) 1845 - 1914 — Oil on canvas, 19" x 25"

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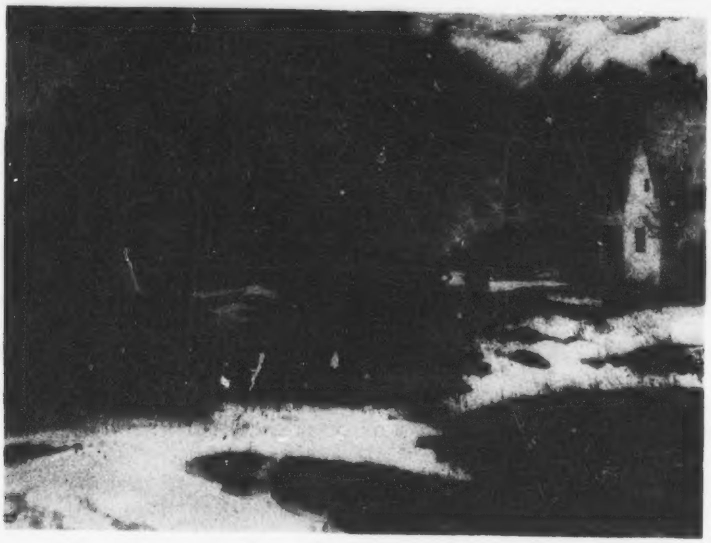

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Canvas size 30" x 40"

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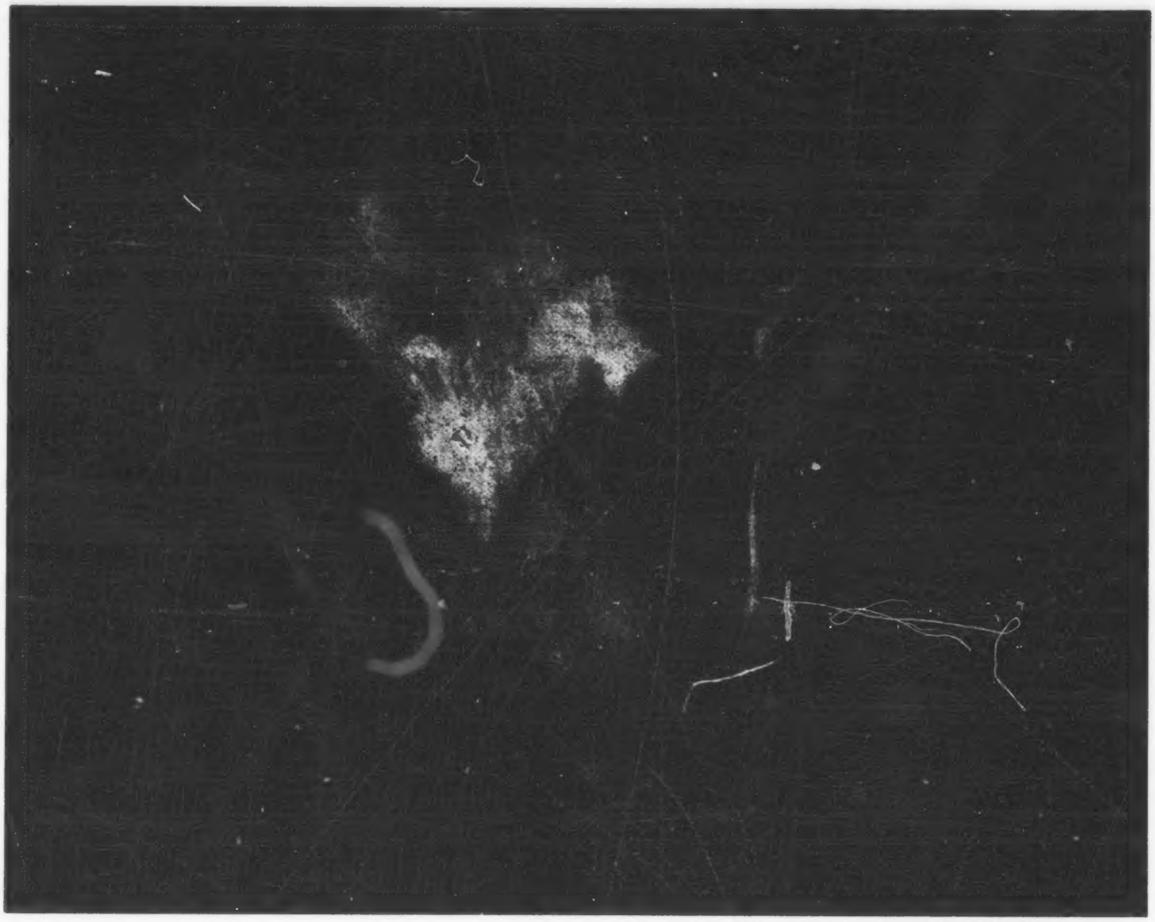

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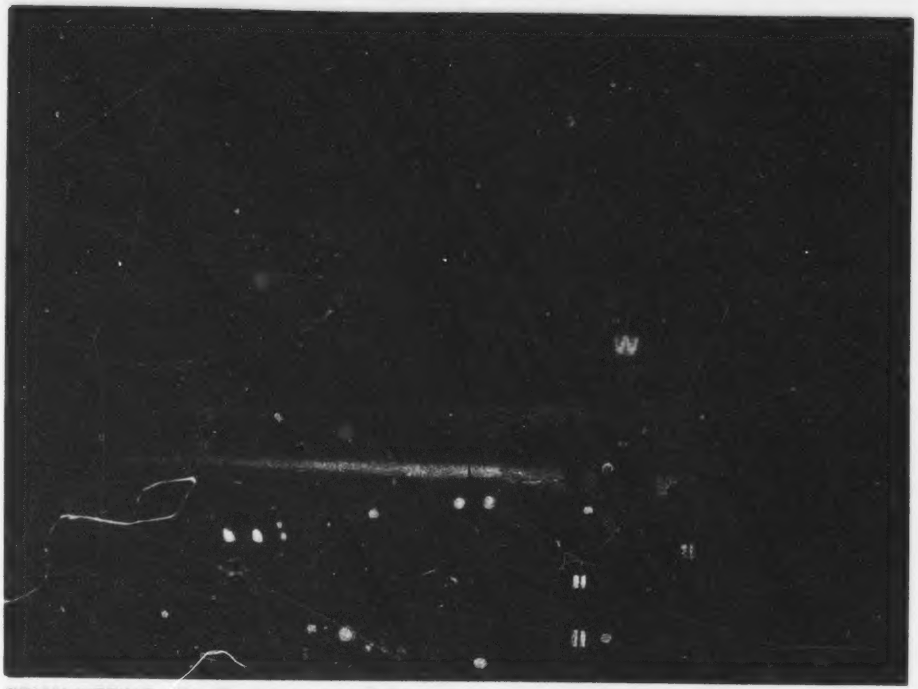

BRIAN KIPPING, *"Big W"*, (Vancouver, B.C.), oil, wax on wood, 18" x 24", 1988

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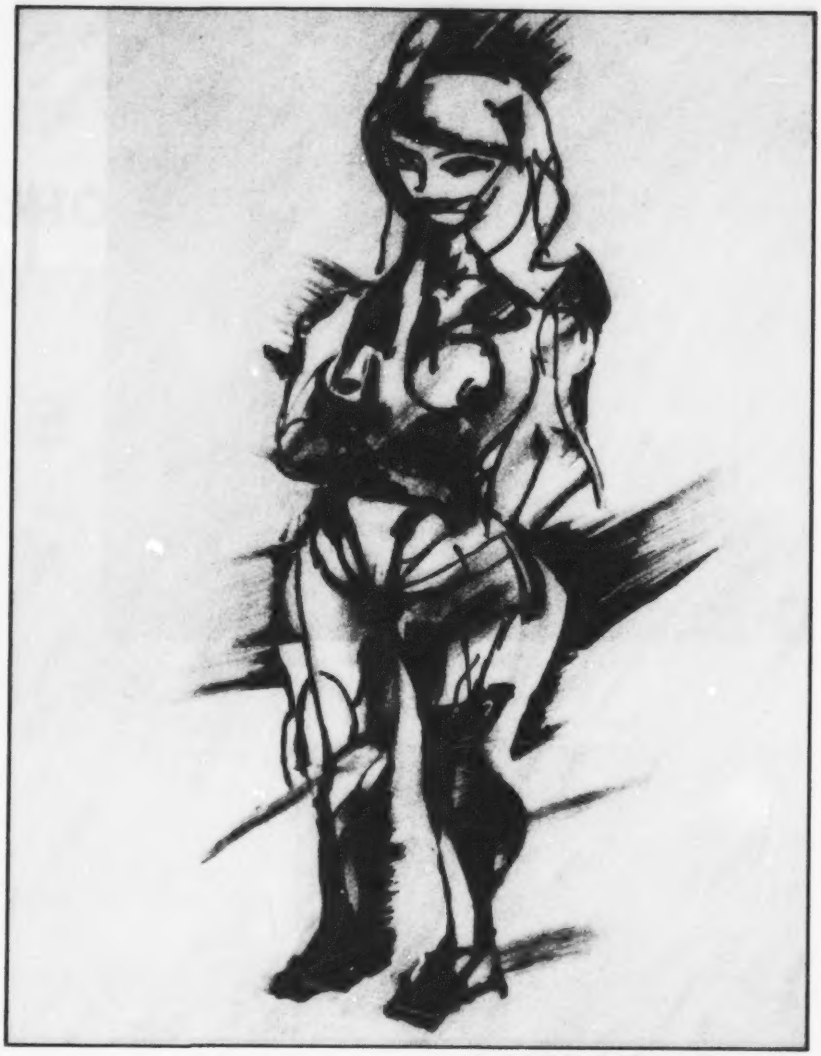

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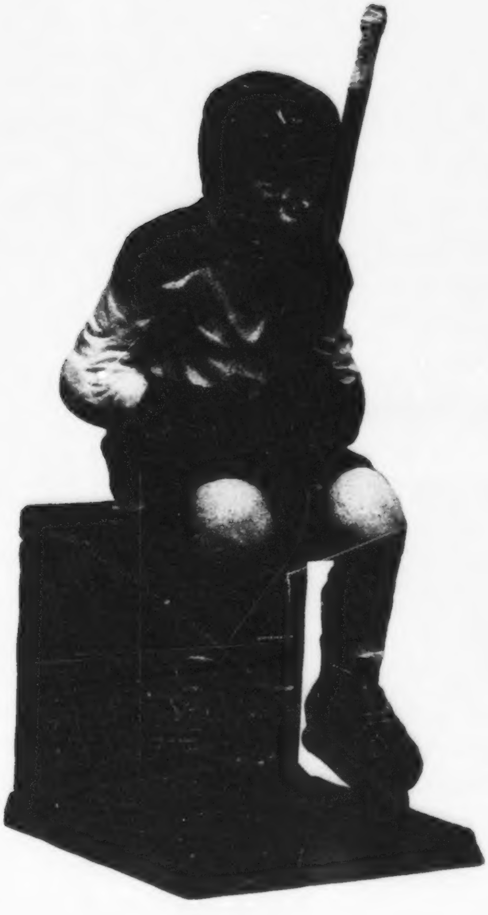

"The Power Play", clay and wood, 1988, 57½ x 24 x 23 cm (photo: Susan Fafard)

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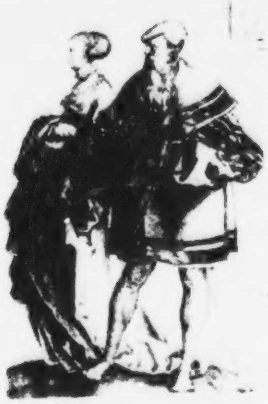

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NANCY STEVENS

Right:
Moon and marigolds, *1988, acrylic on board, 34-1/2 x 25-1/2 in.*

Above:
Friends and Lovers, *1988, acrylic on board, 29 x 29 in.*

Received her art education at Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (1952-53), B.F.A. at Mount Allison University (1953-56) and at Academy of Fine Arts in Rome (1958). Nancy worked as a graphic artist with the CBC and as a freelance commercial artist before devoting herself entirely to her painting in 1970. Since then she has exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions in both the Maritimes and Toronto. Her work is found in many important collections both public and private, including The Canada Council, Nova Scotia Art Bank, Esso Resources, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and University of King's College.

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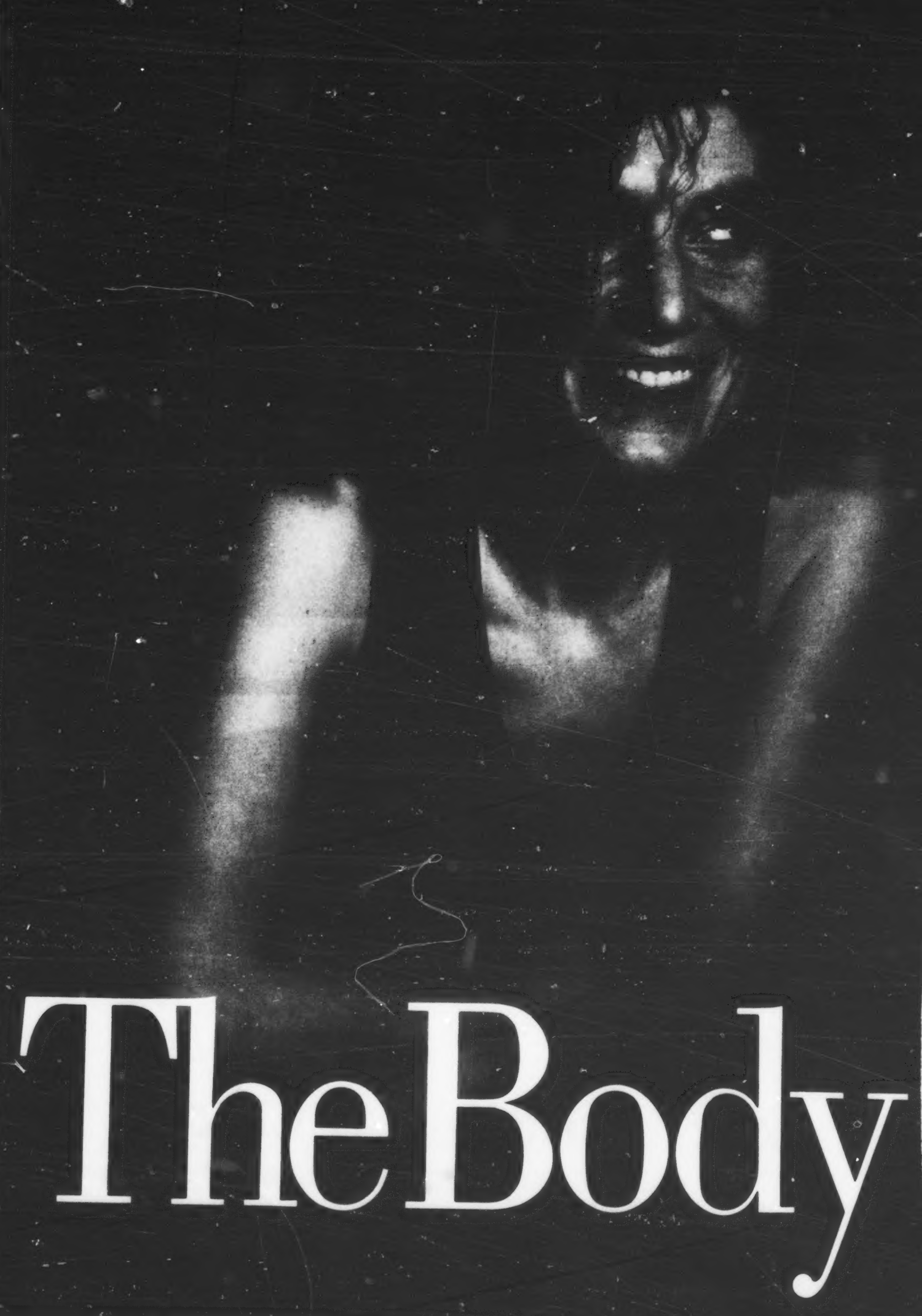
The Body



Electric

Alternating currents of wit and wrath, passion and intelligence, run through all of Jana Sterbak's work. The result is art that is at once deceptively simple, demanding and even slightly dangerous

BY MARNI JACKSON
PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY
BY PAUL ORENSTEIN

Walking through a gallery can be a strangely desolate experience. We wander around like guests at a cocktail party, desperate for some connection. More often than not, after saying the same smart things to the same five people, we leave burdened with more ideas and untouched. There are rooms full of art that engage the mind but can't pierce through the skin of our self-consciousness.

But to come across an object by artist Jana Sterbak is a different sort of encounter. Her three-dimensional pieces reveal the secret lives of a whole range of familiar materials — cast iron, chicken wire, muslin, meat. These objects have an immediate, visceral effect; at the same time, they are the embodiment of an intriguing and witty train of thought. They heat up, cool down, crackle with electricity, give off a bad smell and behave as if they actively resent being objects. They are droll and literal — the *Flesh Dress* is a simple frock sewn from 60 pounds of flank steak, a piece that turns the body inside out to better expose our mortality. The *Seduction Couch*, a suavely curved chaise made of perforated metal with a Van de Graaff generator at the foot of it, delivers a mild but distinct shock. Even when the image describes a violent sort of isolation — for instance, the caged woman figure in *I Want You To Feel The Way I Do* — the form hooks the senses and demands a connection. Sterbak makes it clear that even in the dead space between quarrelling lovers, or between a piece of art and the person who steps into its magnetic field, something is always happening. She makes this chemistry visible, and slightly perilous, in her work.

Sterbak's art is rooted in the body and aimed without apology at the emotions (including some not very nice ones). The mysterious ways in which we affect one another, above and beyond language, are given a sympathetic analogy in her work. At the same time, her deceptively simple pieces — so easy to read you scarcely notice the intellectual afterburn — throw off cool waves of paradox. They are cold things that give off heat, images of entrapment that radiate power, a couch that promises to wake you up. Her ideas are embedded so deeply in the materials and the form she chooses that it is hard to separate what is happening to us from what we think about it. This is appealing, and rare. Overtly sensational, secretly cerebral, her objects work at resynthesizing thought and feeling, subject and object, mind and body — all the tiresome little dualities that make us break the world down into isolated fragments, of which we are one isolated part.

Rummaging around in the new physics, Sterbak found scientific grounds for her metaphors (in fact, one of her works, *I Can Hear You Think* [1984-85], is dedicated to physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking). "I do not think of myself as a discrete entity," she wrote in notes to an exhibition of her work last year at the

MEASURING TAPES
(1979-82). IMAGES COURTESY OF GALERIE RENE BLOUIN

As the *Flesh Dress* rots, it shrinks, assuming a shape like medieval armor and a color like blackened bronze. By making work that is so fiercely physical, Sterbak ends up pushing it in the direction of metaphysics

ABOVE: *ARTIST AS A COMBUSTIBLE* (1986), 30-SEC. PERFORMANCE

RIGHT: *VANITAS: FLESH DRESS FOR ALBINO ANORECTIC* (1987), MEAT, METAL, PLASTIC. PHOTO BY LOUIS LUSSIER

Winnipeg Art Gallery. "In fact I think there is no such thing, on the emotional, social, economic, even the atomic level." (Or as the noted lay physicist Lily Tomlin put it, "We all time-share the same atoms.") Sometimes this symbiosis is not entirely welcome, as in the drawing entitled *House of Pain* (1987-88), a crisp blueprint of domestic dangers featuring a "Krazy Glue shower" and a "Glass Shard swimming pool." As private as this document appears to be, it instantly elicits a rather shameful sense of recognition. Who hasn't mulled over equally explicit and ridiculous strategies of revenge? This rage is so precise and detailed, it's a joke. Sterbak's humor and detachment help us confront feelings that, for better or worse, keep us human. In the same way, *I Want You To Feel...* doesn't so much amplify the artist as illuminate our own absurd, painful memories of betrayal, parting and all those unmailed vengeful letters.

I Want You To Feel... is her most theatrical piece, a headless female figure fashioned out of chicken wire — a cage-dress, or transparent dummy, with uninsulated nichrome wire coiled around it. Thick black cords are plugged into two wall outlets. As you approach the piece, an electronic eye ("which anyone can buy at Radio Shack," says Sterbak, who likes her technology old-fashioned and readable) activates the piece, causing the nichrome to heat up and then cool down. You can feel the heat if you stand close enough, and above the figure, projected in white letters on the wall, is a rather lengthy, scathing text: "I want you to feel the way I do: there's barbed wire wrapped all around my head and my skin grates on my flesh from the inside. How can you be so comfortable only five inches to the left of me? I don't want to hear myself think, feel myself move. It's not that I want to be numb, I want to slip under your skin: I will listen for the sound you hear, feed on your thought, wear your clothes...."

The image radiates power and helplessness. It suggests many things — a woman who feels caged inside her body, captive to her feelings and still throwing off heat despite the inert character to her left. It suggests power, deprived of a connection. But it is not confined to the obvious reading of wounded-woman-fights-back. It is also about being co-opted on other levels and it transforms the isolation and passivity of the art object into something more aggressive and unpredictable. A certain relationship — personal, cultural, political or perhaps a combination of all three — has frozen this female figure into a transparent, hot-wired suit of armor. But the object fights back, resisting this perception and putting the subject in the hot seat instead. "Since I have no choice but to have these feelings," the situation says, "you have no choice but to try to share them." It's a doomed experiment, as all estranged lovers sooner or later realize, but the impetus is very human.

Another difficult dialogue takes place in an earlier work, *I Can Hear You Think*, which consists of two small cast-iron heads lying on the floor. One head is wrapped with magnetic wire and attached by conspicuous black cords to a power source that creates an electromagnetic field. This is not a symbol but an event — the pull is strong enough to befuddle your watch and animate your earrings. One head looks inert and detached, while the other head stands apart in an invisible but powerful relationship to it. The piece gives thinking a specific density. This modest scene is pointedly cerebral, while at the same time aggressively sensible. "I want the material reality to resemble my idea as closely as possible," says Sterbak.

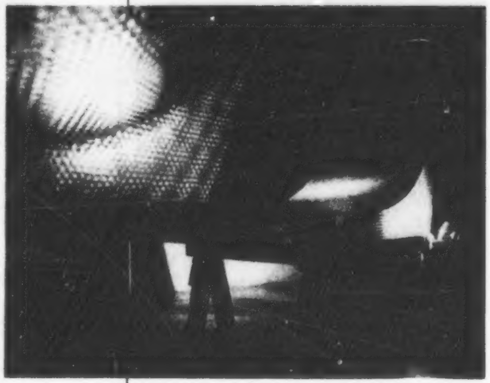
Sterbak came to Canada from Czechoslovakia in 1968, when she was 13. She has lived all over — New York for four years, Vancouver, Europe, and right now moves between Toronto and Montreal, where she describes herself, with some relish, as "totally detached." She somewhat perversely enjoys what she calls the "freedom of the lack of market" in Canada, where artists can develop, during the long stretches between shows, in a bracing atmosphere of benign neglect. ("The only problem here is that there is very little strife.") Raised on dialectical materialism, transplanted into the heart of

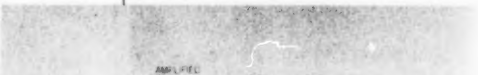
capitalism, schooled in minimalism, she has cultural perspective to burn and would rather not ally herself with any "-ism" — even feminism. "It's not just about personal politics," Sterbak says about her work in general, "it is also about being a colonial subject. Canada is a colony. I grew up in a country surrounded by bigger countries. I know what being colonized feels like." Her work, grounded in the body and "concretized emotion," seems to take its female point of view for granted, instead of making it the main point. In fact, her work avoids conclusions like the plague. "I prefer open-ended situations and I'm not out to be didactic — that's not the role of the artist." What happens when her work gets moralistic, as in *Flesh Dress*, which on the surface is an object lesson in mortality? "I just let it happen," she shrugs. "I kind of think of the moral aspect of my work as rather quaint and anachronistic. But I also think morals are going to come back in a big way."

In person, Sterbak projects the same introspective authority as her work. When I met her for tea at the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto (her time, her place), she was already there in a corner, looking every bit as contradictory as her work: well-defended and transparent, tough and fragile, frank and indecipherable. You also can't help thinking that they don't make faces like hers in Canada. Her manner is measured and thoughtful, with surprising ambushes of warmth and humor. As a self-critical person to begin with, she has a kind of allergy to other people's interpretations of her work. When I repeated what critics had said about her work, a wonderful look of indifference came over her face. She cultivates her isolation. Although her original Toronto dealer, Ydessa Hendeles, will mention a number of artists in the same breath as Sterbak — Jannis Kounellis and Rebecca Horn, for example — Sterbak is still quite a solitary figure in the Canadian scene.

"Her work feels genuine to me," says Hendeles. "It doesn't have the aura of strategy. She's willing to address emotions such as pain and rage, which is unusual in this country. I think she's very brave to risk being hot in a cold climate. Rebecca Horn is now using electrostatic charges in her work — Jana's work pre-

T he more you try to nail Sterbak's pieces down, the more they resist translation. Familiar objects — a house, a dress, a couch — turn into unpredictable subjects, capable of acting on us instead of the other way round





TOP: *SEDUCTION COUCH* (1986). STEEL, ELECTROSTATIC CHARGE, VAN DE GRAAFF GENERATOR, 50 ½" X 29" X 92"
ABOVE: *HOUSE OF PAIN* (1987-88), 53 ⅛" X 40 ¼"

RIGHT: *I WANT YOU TO FEEL THE WAY I DO...(THE DRESS)* (1984-85). NICKEL-CHROME WIRE MOUNTED ON WIRE MESH, ELECTRICAL CORD, TEXT. COURTESY THE NATIONAL GALLERY

dates this, although of course people now may see it the other way round. I think, for instance, that her *Flesh Dress* will become more interesting as time goes by."

Vanitas: Flesh Dress for Albino Anorectic (1987) is a heavy and somewhat heavy-handed garment stitched together from flank steak. Photographs depicting a model wearing this visceral little number sometimes accompany the real thing, worn by a dressmaker's dummy suspended by a chain from the ceiling. As it rots, it shrinks, assuming a shape like medieval armor and a color like blackened bronze. The "live" dress is quite a shocker, conjuring up a flash of what that cold, clammy, fat-marbled stuff must feel like on the skin. It's a way of filleting the self into spirit and flesh for a moment, so that the "I" can feel the sensation of this ungainly and perishable body. *Flesh Dress* undresses us down to spirit.

The "dead" dress is surprisingly shapely, close to a real garment sewn together from hides or pelts. "In Montreal, after a few days the dress really stank," said Sterbak with satisfaction. Garment workers in the same building as the show, at Galerie René Blouin, came up on their lunch hours to marvel at the undress-in-progress. It isn't exactly a complicated piece: it confronts us with an accelerated image of dying — which, we are reminded, is not an idea but a fairly appalling physical process, although not without its own macabre beauty. The photographs also dutifully incarnate that familiar old phrase about women as pieces of meat. Not a pretty concept, if you put it to work. By making something so fiercely physical, Sterbak pushes it in the direction of metaphysics.

The more you try to nail these pieces down, the more they resist translation. Familiar, rather domestic objects — a house, a dress, a couch — turn into unpredictable subjects, capable of acting on us, instead of the other way around. They look vaguely mutinous in the context of a gallery, and this, despite their come-here-go-away ambivalence, is most seductive.

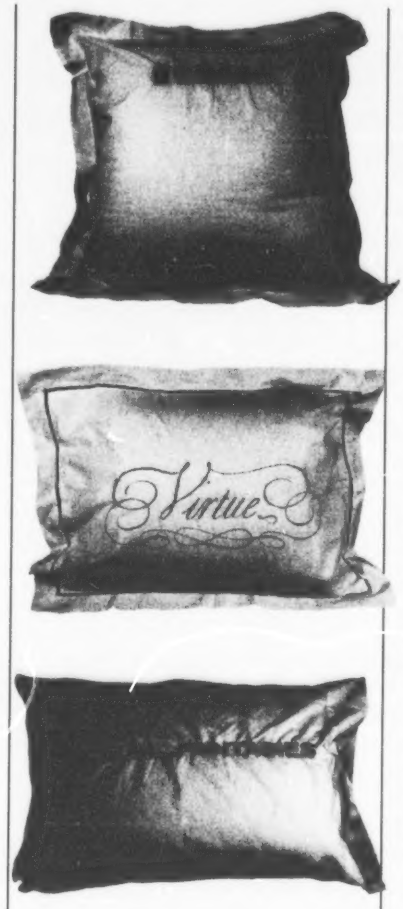
Seduction Couch is a see-through chaise of perforated metal, a skeleton of a bed that is lit so as to project a beguiling pattern on the wall. But seduction entails a degree of danger. Beside it stands a generator that throws off blue sparks and the odor of ozone. When you touch the couch (as everyone wants to), you get a harmless but arresting shock. It is the sort of couch on which odalisques once reclined and which some shrinks still use, with the velvet stripped away to reveal latent power and an ambiguous threat. It is a passive image wired for action. It says something unequivocal about the perverse, irrational nature of desire and suggests the ability of an object perceived as unthreatening and inert — as, for instance, art in a gallery or a woman on a chaise — to fight back, startle and disrupt. This somewhat Victorian chaise, an X-ray of the plush thing waiting to be ravished by our consuming gaze, turns into dangerous furniture. As René Blouin, Sterbak's Montreal dealer, explains, "When people see it, they want to touch it. When they touch it, they get a shock, which makes them wary — but it also makes them curious. Then, despite fair warning, they touch it again." He laughs. "It's like love."

Sterbak also does cool pieces. *Measuring Tapes* (1979-82) is an early work that consists of tapes spiralled into freestanding cones that can be worn on the fingers. The effect of the cone-claws is subtly creepy. They imply that the fingertips are a kind of brain, a cool, measuring brain, and that touch is intelligent, even critical. The spiralling tapes with their topographical ridges look like amplified fingerprints. A recent piece, included in Renee Baert's show at The Power Plant, *Enchantment/Disturbance*, was more formally presented and therefore less successful. ("Her work is so goddamned modest," laments Blouin with admiration. "No matter how I try, it always subverts any flashy presentation.") It was called *Standard Lives* (1988) and consisted of several wide, transparent measuring tapes (part of an edition of 30), imprinted with a Letraset pageant of stereotypes: babies with hair bows, girls in prom dresses, guys in cars, the happy couple, the woman on the phone, the man in the office, then a few brooding portraits followed by jolly old age. *Stan-*

want you to feel the way I do: barbed wire wrapped all around head and my skin grates on my flesh from the inside. How can you be so comfortable only 5" to the left of me? I don't want to hear myself think, feel myself move. It's not that I want to be numb, I want to slip under your skin: I will listen for the sound you hear, feed on your thought, wear your clothes.

Now I have your attitude and you're not comfortable anymore. Making them yours you relieved me of my opinions, habits, impulses. I should be grateful but instead ... you're beginning to irritate me: I am not going to live with myself inside your body, and I would rather practice being new on someone else.

Sterbak presents the pillows on pedestal-beds, which turns the objects into a 'dense situation,' a sort of cold, modern bedroom where the usual activities (passion and dreams) have been replaced by things like 'Aesthetics'



ABOVE: *ETHICS, VIRTUE, SEXUAL FANTASIES,* AND *REPUTATION* (1987), EMBROIDERY ON COTTON

RIGHT: *GENERIC MAN-VERSION I (MEMENTO)* (1987) 4" X 5". A VARIATION ON PROPOSED 10' X 12' BILLBOARD IN REGINA (1989)

dard Lives is witty in an editorial sort of way, but it doesn't have the resonance of the best of her work.

What her art does best, it seems, is to give us specific locations for emotion. In *Golem: Sensations as Objects* (1982), she arranged seven little manhandled hearts in relation to a trail of equally woebegone body parts: a bronze spleen, a lead penis, a rubber stomach, a lead hand, leading up to an as yet undamaged heart. These small, rather pitiable objects make us feel for ourselves and lay down a visible history. This gesture of turning the body inside out and isolating parts of it has the paradoxical effect of reintegrating perception with feeling.

Several works suggest not just a thinker hungry for connection but a writer fatigued by the "tyranny of language." Early in her career, after studying art in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, Sterbak concentrated on critical writing, but she found this got in the way of her work. "I see it happen with other artists," she says. "The more they work on theory, the more their art lags behind their theoretical thinking. I found eventually that in order for my work to have the maximum oomph, I had to stop writing."

Reading, however, continues to be a regular source of ideas and inspiration. Euripides' *Medea* was one of the catalysts for *I Want You To Feel The Way I Do.* In the play, a woman who has been dumped for a richer bride presents the other woman with a crown and a dress that consume her in flames. All the great and darkly comic articulators of alienation — Max Frisch, Beckett, Kafka, Heinrich Böll, Gunter Grass — are as important to her as visual influences.

But the writing that she deserted in order to explore the physical properties of matter crept back into a few relatively recent, literate pieces that almost work like concrete poetry. *Attitudes* (1987) is a series of white cotton pillows bearing unusual monograms: "Greed," "Virtue," "Reputation," "Sexual Fantasies" and other modern motives for coupling. It's not a "female craft piece" — Sterbak ordered the monograms from a company just like any customer, which was part of the idea. "Monograms are a big thing in New York especially. It's a bit like buying ripped jeans or pre-faded denims — it's consumable, fake history. I was also responding to some of the reactionary sexual attitudes and loveless couplings I saw around me, which I associate with the 'new wealth.'" One little footnote pillow also says "Disease," a new word to enter the bedroom, where it is now safer to sleep with certain ideas than people. She presents the pillows on pedestals that are beds, which turns the objects into a "dense situation," a sort of cold, modern bedroom where the usual activities (passion and dreams) have been replaced by things like "Aesthetics." Homeless desire turns up in another work, a transparent piece of white muslin embroidered with the word "Desire" in gothic typeface, a ghostly document like a see-through tombstone. For Sterbak, words are as dense and volatile as certain metals.

The word made flesh works the opposite way around in several other pieces in which Sterbak plays with dictionary definitions. In one, a piece of text consisting of white letters sewn onto black felt explains that the word "boudoir" derives from the French "bouder," meaning "to pout," which makes the bedroom more accurately *The Sulking Room.*

Sterbak herself doesn't maintain a formal studio, just a "thinking room." "That way I can move around a lot," she says. The craft aspect of her work is not critical to her — she likes to work with engineers and electricians for the actual construction ("It's my way of being in the world"). In notes to her exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, she explains how she likes to work. "I write down my ideas as I conceive them. If I feel, half a year later, the necessity to produce them, I do so. Most of the time, I don't. This way of working is the most efficient that I have found." The result of this patience is a small but potent body of work that manages, with its alternating currents of wit and wrath, passion and intelligence, to make us feel.

Jana Sterbak is showing work at Galerie René Blouin to March 18; Artists' Space, New York, March 2-18; the Regina Art Gallery March 16 to May 5; and the National Gallery October 5 to December 3.

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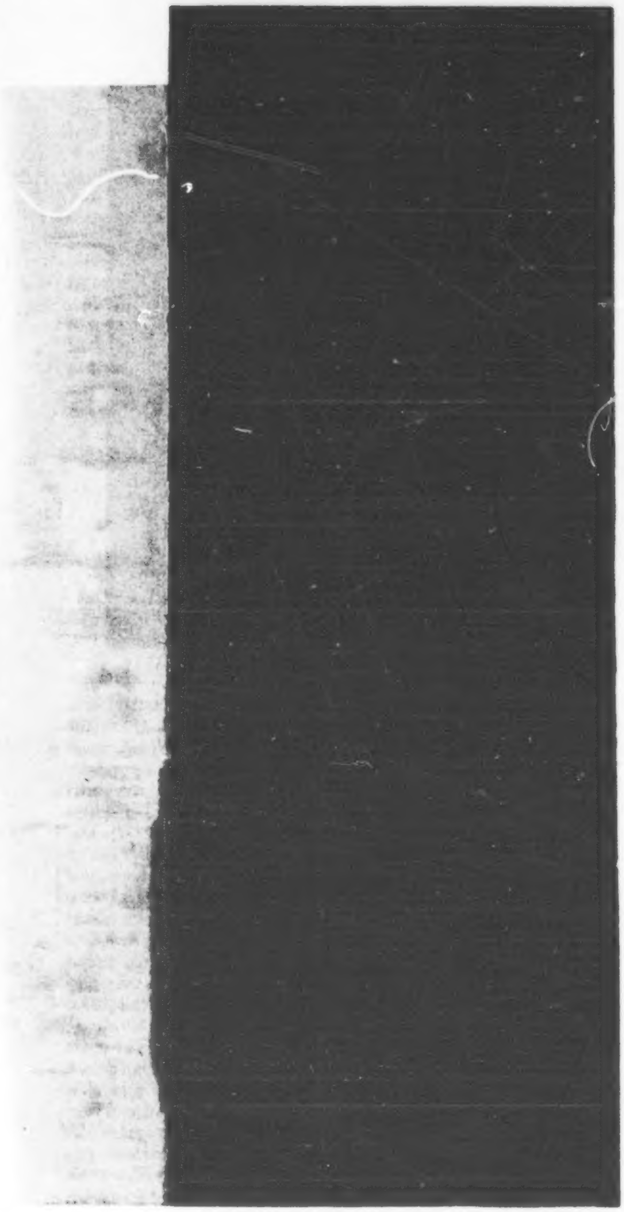
CHARTING THE PROGRESS OF COLOR PAINTING IN CANADA

BY GARY MICHAEL DAULT



LOUIS COMTOIS
CHROMATIC PRESENCE #6, 1987
The recent paintings of Louis Comtois are like monumental enlargements of the pivotal moments of color modulation in his flat, lustrous paintings of the late '70s and early '80s. Those severe and rather cerebral paintings were composed of panels of equal height but of varying widths and painted in nearly monotonal hues which, upon careful inspection, revealed themselves to be subtly different in light values and intensities. These newer paintings, derived as much from the skyline of New York (where the artist lives) as from the rigors of the Montreal formal abstraction of his earlier years, generate their meaning from coloristic "impurity" and structural discontinuity, the pleasures of which are here rather more ironic than relentless. *Mixed-media collage, 28" x 34¼". Courtesy Olga Korper Gallery*

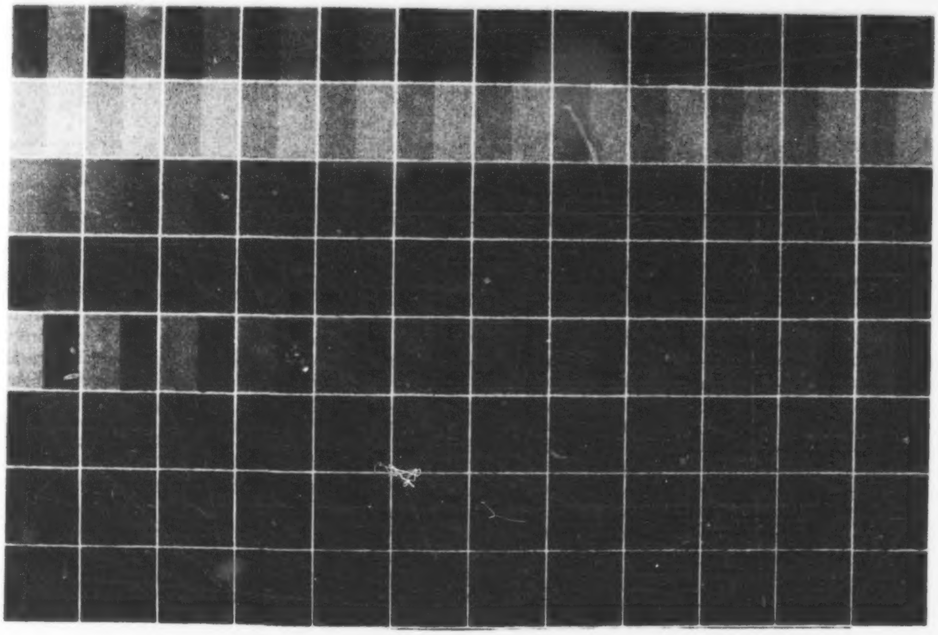
Early in 1912, the young French painter Robert Delaunay sent an ecstatic letter to Wassily Kandinsky. In it he outlined his researches into the effects of the transparency of color and the ways in which even this absorbing study was paling, so to speak, before his growing obsession with the nature of raw color taken on its own terms. "Color, the fruit of light," Delaunay wrote, "is the foundation of the painter's means of painting — and its language." Later that year came Delaunay's breakthrough to what he termed "the actual nuclear problem of painting." The resulting work, a brave experiment in the behavior of color freed from any discursive content, was a small, targetlike organization of color bands in high chromatic juxtaposition, boldly but accurately called *Disk, First Nonobjective Painting*. Delaunay always referred to it, optically speaking, as a "blow with the fist."

At the time of Delaunay's letter, Kandinsky was himself pushing hard at the limits of the representable in painting. It was in 1913-14 that he succeeded in painting out of his pictures the last declaration of any recognizable object or event, producing as a result the brushy, delicately wrought little pictures that have, in turn, also come to be regarded as the world's first nonobjective paintings. Kandinsky, while he undoubtedly admired Delaunay's pioneering gusto, may well have had misgivings, however, about the Frenchman's centripetal plunge back to an exploration of color as a set of essentially optical enactments. In his book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1912), Kandinsky carefully identified the spiritual with the search for the abstract in art. At the same time, he assigned abstraction a sort of watchdog role as a first defence against "the nightmare of materialism" that lurked everywhere within the practice of representational painting. For Kandinsky, Delaunay's sprightly playing in the fields of "the actual nuclear problem of painting" was too fraught with the thingness of pigment and too caught up with the mechanisms of perception to contribute anything much, however abstract its progress, to a deepening acquisition of the spirituality of art. It is not wide of the mark to suggest that, in the arena of pure color as the agency of meaning in art, the color painters of our century have lined up either behind Kandinsky or behind Delaunay — which is to say they have invariably come to see color freed from representational content either as a primary condition of the eventless purity and deliberate negation we might think of as a kind of mystic silence (as in the paintings of Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman and Yves Klein) or they have sought meaning of an entirely opposed kind whereby unmediated color becomes so fully disclosed and optically available that it defeats any symbolic or anecdotal or atmospheric interpretation whatsoever (as with many of the paintings of Ellsworth Kelly or the color-chart paintings of Gerhard Richter). There are, of course, crossovers, defections to alternate philosophical camps, muddyings of the coloristic waters. For the most part, however, color painters are as rigorously demanding of themselves as they are of their viewers, carrying their personal researches into the meaning of color far beyond delectation, ending finally as virtuosi of scale, surface, chromatic choice and adjustment, technicians of the sacredness of color and of its profaneness, forcing color, through the pressure of their attentiveness, to yield up both its secrets and to refresh its self-evident truths.

Canadian painters have made and are making substantial contributions to this always rarefied, often sanctified, sometimes vilified field of visual research. Guido Molinari, having worked his way critically through both surrealism and that particularly Gallic modulation of abstract-expressionism called *tachisme* or *automatism* in Montreal in the 1950s, was perhaps the pioneer in Canada of a fully developed theoretical defection from what he felt were the constrictions of an ongoing cubist-generated taste-making in pictures. He and painters like Claude Tousignant, Fernand Leduc and Yves Gaucher took it upon themselves to explore the space-time continuum locked into color-as-shape. In Toronto, Ron Martin began in the 1960s to explore the perceptual effects of color as repetition, as reflexive surface, and, in the majestic color-chip paintings of the late '70s and early '80s, as symbol and selfhood. More recently, painters like Toronto's Arlene Stamp have come to see color as a sort of mute utterance, as a conceptual lever by which a body of color might be transformed into a metaphysical gel for the illumination of diverse aspects of the artist's being. These are divergent needs and aims, all of them wrung from the hallowed fact of color by the force and tenacity of the artist's will. They are also needs and aims that circle endlessly back to Paul Klee's ravished notebook entry where he notes, in a paroxysm of allegiance to the givens of his art, that "Color has me. I don't need to strain after it. It has me forever. I know that. That is the meaning of the happy hour. I and color are one. I am a painter."

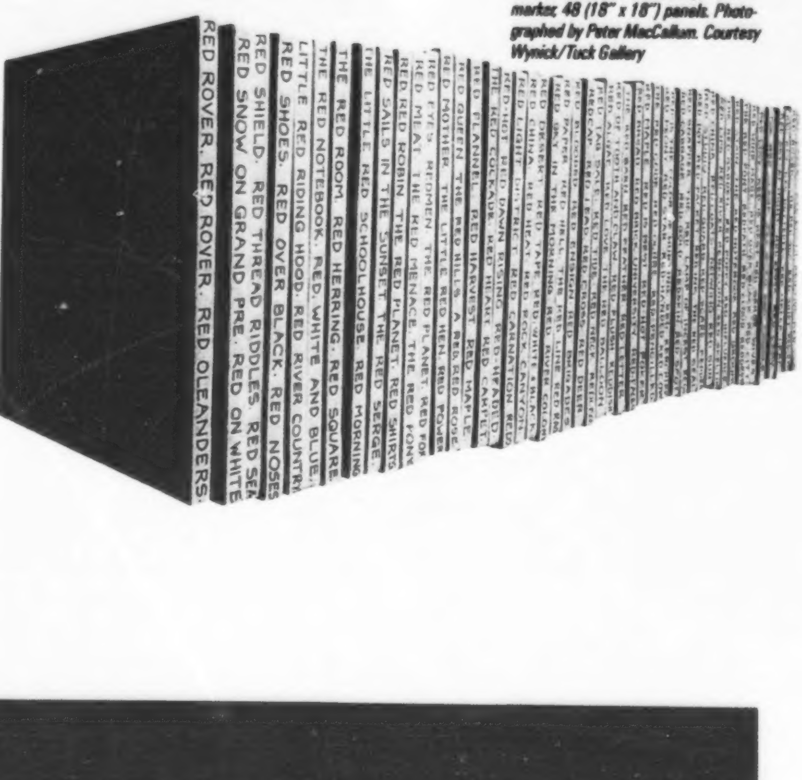
GUIDO MOLINARI
QUANTIFICATEUR ROUGE, 1987
For Molinari, color has always created space rather than vice versa. This space, freed from the localized tensions that inevitably result when the artist composes instead of constructs, is a laboratory for the study of what Molinari calls "color-light" — the way color works when it is allowed to reinhabit its own optical province and behave like a force of nature. In the stripe paintings of the '60s and '70s, the artist allowed his color to shimmer and dazzle through a whole series of demonstrations of the intricate program of colors in juxtaposition and comparison. The *Quantificateur* paintings of the past decade are, by contrast, low-threshold paintings, exquisitely slow to reveal both their structure and color performance. *Acrylic on canvas, 56" x 56". Courtesy Grünwald Gallery*

RON MARTIN
UNTITLED, 1981
Ron Martin's color-chip paintings came after his well-known black paintings of the mid-'70s and occupied his attention for almost five years. Based on the commercial color charts for Bocour Aqua-tec acrylic paints, the new paintings were composed of grids which were set up to hold carefully orchestrated systems of doubled rectangles of color, presented as agencies of our understanding of comparative chromatics — where a pure hue would be optically tested against a tint of the same hue, for example, or where a row of color constants would grow less incontrovertibly constant through repetition and accumulation. Ultimately the pictures used color symbolically inasmuch as they led us to question the reliability of our acquisition of color's materiality and meaning. *Acrylic on canvas, 96" x 144". Courtesy Carmen Lamanna Gallery*

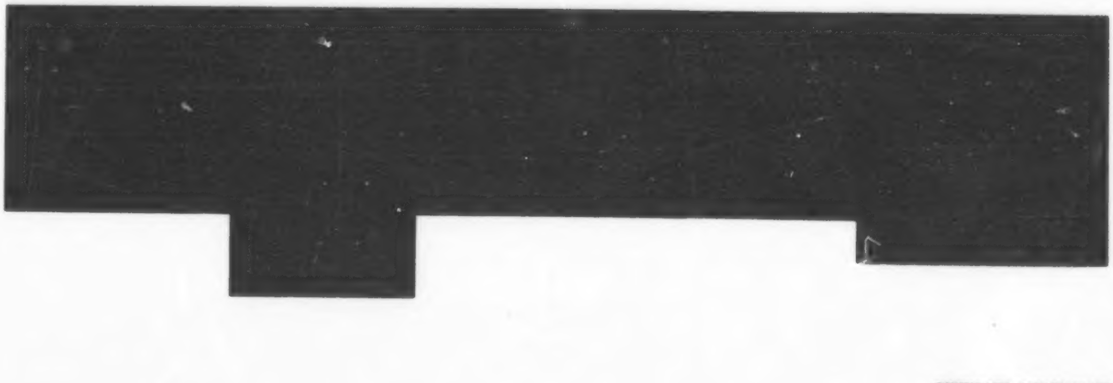


CLAUDE TOUSIGNANT
GONG 34 9/1966, 1966
Like Molinari, Claude Tousignant worked his way through all the expressionist modes of painting visited upon the Montreal avant-garde of the 1950s, emerging at last from what they both considered a slough of personality and hollow, heroic taste-mongering into, in Tousignant's case, the production of monotonal panels of uninflected enamel, as clean and hard as refrigerator doors (like *Monochrome orangé*, 1956). His series of *Transformateur Chromatique* paintings (1965), *Gongs* (1966), and *Accélérateurs Chromatiques* (1968), all mandalas made up of concentric color bands, flickered the color out toward the edges and back in again, setting up a system of optical reinforcement and cancellation that made the works oddly self-referential and eloquently mute. *Acrylic on canvas, 34" diameter. © Claude Tousignant 1989/VIS*ART Copyright Inc.*

ARLENE STAMP
RED WORK, 1988
More has been written about red than about any other color. The color of the heart, the flesh, the emotions (one thinks of the sanguinity of Valentine's Day), red is, as Yeats pointed out, "the color of magic in every country," the last color stop on the road to alchemical purity. This work, a part of artist Arlene Stamp's conceptual anatomy of redness represented by her current ongoing Red Works, is a shard of her use of red as a coloristic accompaniment to the other investigative axes running through her life, a red equivalent to poet John Donne's thinly beaten sheet of gold which extended infinitely out over experience. As Stamp puts it, "I want red to be all the colors." *Oil on canvas, velcro tape, adhesive tape, felt marker, 48 (18" x 18") panels. Photographed by Peter MacCallum. Courtesy Wynick/Tuck Gallery*


RED ROVER. RED ROVER. RED OLEANDERS.
RED SNOW ON GRAND PRE. RED ON WHITE
RED SHIELD. RED THREAD RIDDLES. RED SEA
RED SHOES. RED OVER BLACK. RED NOSES
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. RED RIVER COUNTRY
THE RED NOTEBOOK. RED, WHITE AND BLUE.
THE RED ROOM. RED HERRING. RED SQUARE.
THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE. RED MORNING
RED SAILS IN THE SUNSET. THE RED SERGE.
RED ROBIN. THE RED PLANET. RED SHIRTS
RED MEAT. THE RED MENACE. THE RED PONY
RED EYES. REDMEN. THE RED PLANET. RED FOX
RED MOTHER. THE LITTLE RED HEN. RED POWER
RED QUEEN. THE RED HILLS. A RED RED ROSE.
RED FLANNEL. RED HARVEST. RED MAPLE

JAAN POLDAAS
BLUE POLES, 1988
Painter Jaan Poldaas is a virtuoso of discrimination, a maker of nice differences in color, texture, shape, size, coloristic weight. The complexity of his paintings lurks within their apparent ingenuousness the way the mass of an iceburg idles beneath the waterline. His squares and rectangles of color are supported by surfaces of linen, canvas, dacron, cotton duck — grounds sufficiently varied "to get the surfaces going" as Poldaas puts it, and to invite a sort of optical participation between painting and viewer, admitting responses that vary from a relaxed seduction by the sensuousness of the work alone to a more deeply involving attention to the works' insistent silences. "Whatever I do with all my heart and mind," Poldaas has said, "will be at least a diagram of my own spirit." *Oil on canvas, linen and dacron, 28" x 106". Private collection, Toronto. Courtesy Costin & Klintworth Gallery*

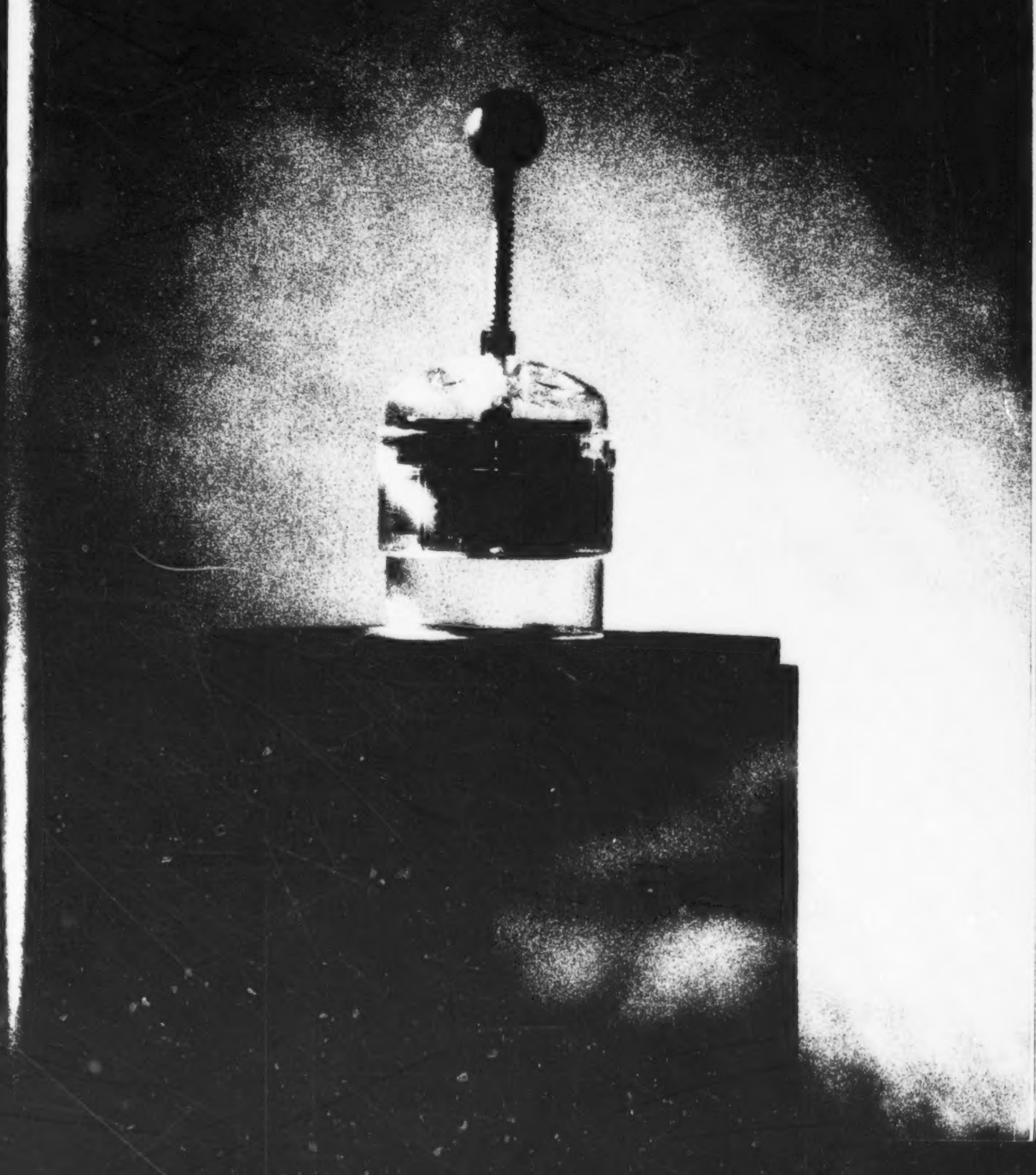


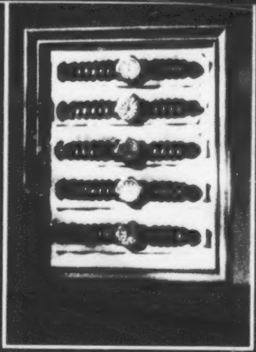
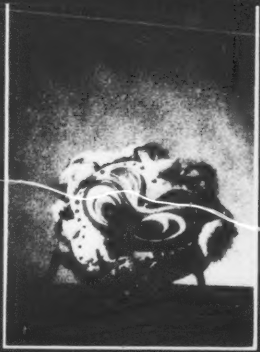
These obscure objects of desire are all, in a sense, commonplace. A food chopper, a toy plane, an old electric desk fan — none, at a casual glance, seems remarkable. But lifted out of context, removed from the detritus of a junk store or rescued from the busy shelves of a Chinese market, each object provides a surprisingly generous amount of visual pleasure. Securely eccentric, often startlingly sculptural, and displaying a joyfully radical palette, these small artifacts are survivors of the eternal commercial turnover, found objects in a world so congested as to make choice an enjoyable

TREASURES OF SERENDIPITY

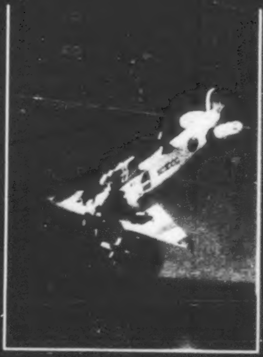
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LORELLA ZANETTI

imperative. The artist's vision has always worked this way, carving out from a complex environment those moments of shape and color and imagery that embody a meaning greater than was originally intended, catching those random objects that float to the surface of consciousness and demand to be examined for their own virtues. ✪ These embroidered Chinese slippers for children, in the form of anthropomorphized red mice with brave yellow tails, possess an undeniable totemic quality. The food chopper, on the other hand, with its lean clarity of line, has all the sculptural integrity of a Naum Gabo.

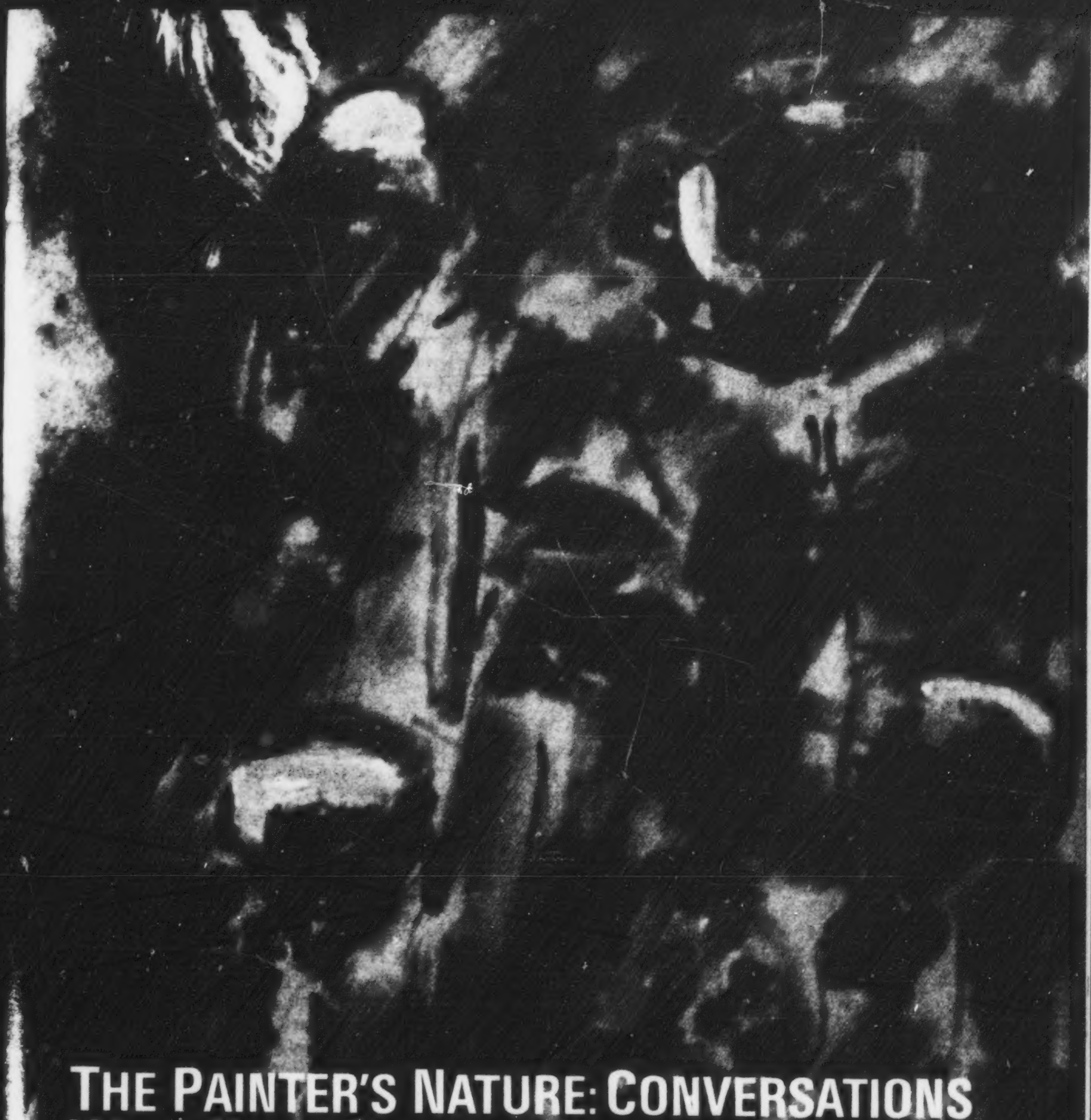


The desk-top fan, its fat, bug-like body held improbably aloft by a bend of chromed wire worthy of Marcel Breuer, is the embodiment of remarkable sculptural economy. ✪ The silver pictures, images of people or parts of the body, were formed as a gift to the saints in thanks for delivery from ill-health. They are glittering shards of real lives, carrying with them the slow, rolling impact of any heartfelt, handmade artifact. ✪ Each paper Chinese watch, intended for burial with the dead, has a nonfunctional pearl winder and printed hands, tiny, efficient emblems of eternity. ✪ Masks are emotions exaggerated and made manifest, graphic pyrotechnics that served drama before they ever served decor.



This cherubic boy cradling a luminous fish is as rosy and glowing as if he'd just emerged from the warm, regenerative water of a bath. ✪ A heraldic airplane, its balsa-wood body stained with dyes, its engines twin stars blazing in the face of the relentlessly cheerful pilot, endearingly brings back the idea of the plane as a construction. ✪ This perverse foil Christmas tree happily forfeits its traditional shape to reside instead within a format closer to the dazzle of a fountain or the flare of fireworks. ✪ The unruly magic of these crystal balls is barely held in check by the transparent box. The color of the box is a fleshly reminder of the limits of magic, its form a container for the spheres' rollaway energy.



THE PAINTER'S NATURE: CONVERSATIONS WITH NOVA SCOTIA'S GERALD FERGUSON

SCENE ONE. 1984. Gerald Ferguson, artist and art teacher, is sitting in his studio-office at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, drawing pencil-on-paper outlines of scenic postcards. He projects the drawings onto canvases and traces the outlines again with a felt marker. Ferguson ships the postcards and the canvases off to oil painter Gerard Collins, who completes the work. The paintings include *Peggy's Cove*, *Apple Blossom Time*, *Mahone Bay* and *Thistles*.

INTERVIEW BY IAN WISEMAN/PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM SKUDRA

GF: The postcard paintings called up a memory of 19th-century painting — by Courbet or Monet. A lot of postcard views seem to be conditioned by the construction of 19th-century painting. To me, a postcard is like a dehydrated painting. What was interesting was to reconstitute it. So I did. And to be detached from it, I subcontracted the actual painting.

IW: *That seems like a cheat.*

GF: No, no, not a cheat. It's a provocation. Those paintings have all the arousals of the wholesome, the romantic, the beautiful. When you subcontract it out, you raise some questions about the nature of art and the nature of subject matter. It seems to me that, today, to go out and paint like that is a totally recreational activity. [*He lights a cigarette.*] It's a reenactment of an already past practice. It's okay with me if somebody else wants to do that, but it's culturally irrelevant.

IW: *When you farmed those paintings out, did you tell the painter not to romanticize them?*

GF: Not at all. I knew his style and I wanted that romantic, facile touch. It had all the right associations with paintings, with feeling. I wanted the *look* of feeling, but not the feeling itself

IW: *Were you happy with the results?*

GF: Before I saw them, I thought there'd be at least a 30-per-cent throwaway rate. But there was none. They were all good. He's a very good painter. And I showed them all as equal — they were all framed the same way, they were all exactly the same size, and I hung them in a line around the gallery.

IW: *But it wasn't your draftsmanship.*

GF: Well, I did the drawings for them.

IW: *But we did lose the autobiographic qualities of your touch.*

GF: That's true. And we associate painting with the authority of the artist's hand. No other medium does that. In sculpture, there's a lot of subcontracted work; the same with printmaking and photography. So what's the big deal about the artist's touch? There are lots of historical precedents for this in painting, too. Take a Rubens, anything bigger than a sketch, and you'll find the hand of Bruegel or van Dyck. The important aspect of art is in the choice, not in the mechanics, not in the handicraft — that's not where the art resides. Even if you have an individual at an easel doing his own painting, he's as culturally conditioned as anyone else is. How much of his stroke is guided by someone else's hand? Look, as long as I say it's my work, then it's my work. The important thing is — as Duchamp said in 1917 — that I've chosen it, I've presented it and I've taken responsibility for it.

SCENE TWO, 1987. Gerald Ferguson is running back and forth between the NSCAD press, where he's supervising the printing of a book, and an empty classroom, where he's doing the unthinkable — painting on canvas. All the paint is black and all the canvases are cut from green tarpaulin. But Ferguson is in there, swinging a brush, getting paint on himself. The paintings are all familiar images, too — big, dark landscapes with the occasional still life thrown in. He's 50 years old and he's having his commercial debut, at the Grünwald Gallery in Toronto. The critics and collectors love the new work. Ferguson is a hit.

GF: The green paintings, the black paint on green canvas, grew out of the Nova Scotian landscapes. The ones I picked were the more archetypal ones, the ones that immediately said LANDSCAPE — *Thistles*, *Mahone Bay*, *Margaree Harbour*. They had something that registered on the back of the brain. They were irresistible. Quite apart from my intellectual attitude to them, they were also operating on some more primitive level. In other words, I liked them. [*He laughs.*]

IW: *I saw one painting of a line of apples and thought it would sell instantly.*

GF: It did. That was a Cézanne painting, absolutely recognizable. Cézanne *owns* apples. It's a culturally imbedded image.

IW: *Your intentions — your sense of art history — might escape a buyer. Someone could buy one of those works simply because he liked it, because he liked the image.*

GF: That's a totally different event. It would be nice to think the buyer was getting what I intended. But the distance between reception and intention is so vast. It's a relative thing. Again, Duchamp — and common sense — tells you that. There's the artist, the object and the viewer. They're all different things. I have a relationship to my work; you might have a totally different one. I'm interested in that. That's why I'm thinking about archetypes right now. [*He chain-lights another cigarette and muses for a moment.*] Maybe if you took all the paintings auctioned off by Sotheby's over the last hundred years, you could run them through a computer and get the average size, configuration, predominant colors and all that business. Then you could construct *the* normative painting, and see where people's heads are at. [*He laughs.*] That's sort of what I was doing, but guided by popular imagery.

IW: *You chose recognizable images, why not recognizable colors?*

GF: Because my intention was to deal with them in a diagrammatic, symbolic fashion — not to turn them into conventional paintings. Why did I use black paint on green tarp? I tried a lot of things — mostly different surfaces — that didn't feel right. These felt right. There's a sensibility factor, an inexplicable judgment factor, that I can't explain rationally. I just liked the look of them.

SCENE THREE, 1988. Gerald Ferguson is working in a new studio. Perhaps studio is too grand a word. It's a room in Pier 21, an old warehouse once used for processing immigrants, squeezed between railway tracks and docks in the industrial south end of Halifax. It's a shock to walk into the room — he's painting flowers, in full color. True, many of them are fairly achromatic, green and black, but some are bright.

GF: On a simplistic level, one can say the green paintings were archetypal, so maybe a detail from one of them is a building block for that archetype. It's like pulling a brick out of a building and focusing on that. It was that simple, how I got started. I tried several paintings, but the ones that had the most appeal were derived from the *Thistles* painting.

IW: *They're really paintings of paintings.*

GF: When you do a detail of flowers in a landscape, a whole host of memories of past paintings flood in. I think this work is about the distance between a painting and the *image* of a painting that we carry around in our heads. They're like impressions of paintings as paintings, rooted in the history of North American post-impressionism from about 1900 to 1930. And because they're details, they're fragments. The scale is smaller than "serious" contemporary painting. These paintings extend outside the frame. It's fun to have an excuse to incorporate these things into my work and not feel historically regressive. You can see how they started to develop and vary. And then a kind of promiscuity occurred — I was having fun. I haven't had fun painting for over 20 years. And suddenly I was using color. That amused me.

IW: *Was it wrong to have fun?*

GF: Maybe. It's my Protestant work ethic — there has to be guilt associated with pleasure. [*He laughs.*] But I'm getting too old to worry about those things.

IW: *Some of these, the brighter ones, should have a wide appeal.*

GF: Some should, some won't. A few of them have an incredibly acceptable look about them. If these are shown in the context of an avant-garde gallery, they may look absolutely hilarious. They might be seen as old-fashioned, or regional, or silly art. [*He laughs.*] Someone told me recently I was coming back to painting through the back door, sneaking up on it. There's an element of truth in that, I suppose. But things change. Everything has its time. [*He looks at the flower paintings for a while, without speaking.*] Another funny thing happened: nearly all these paintings are inductively developed. All my work before was deductively developed. In other words, I had a program. I had a bit of a program here in the beginning, they were conceptually based, but then they developed on their own. They go all over the place.

IW: *Didn't the green paintings get away from you at one point? You were doing apples in a bowl, then they got out of the bowl, then they were spinning around.*

GF: Yeah, they were eccentric. They terminated that group of work. Something else was happening. My ideas were changing a bit, I suppose. So that was the time to stop, crate them up and ship them off. It was a natural break, and it was also the beginning of a school term.

IW: *Did you repress the idea of the spinning fruit?*

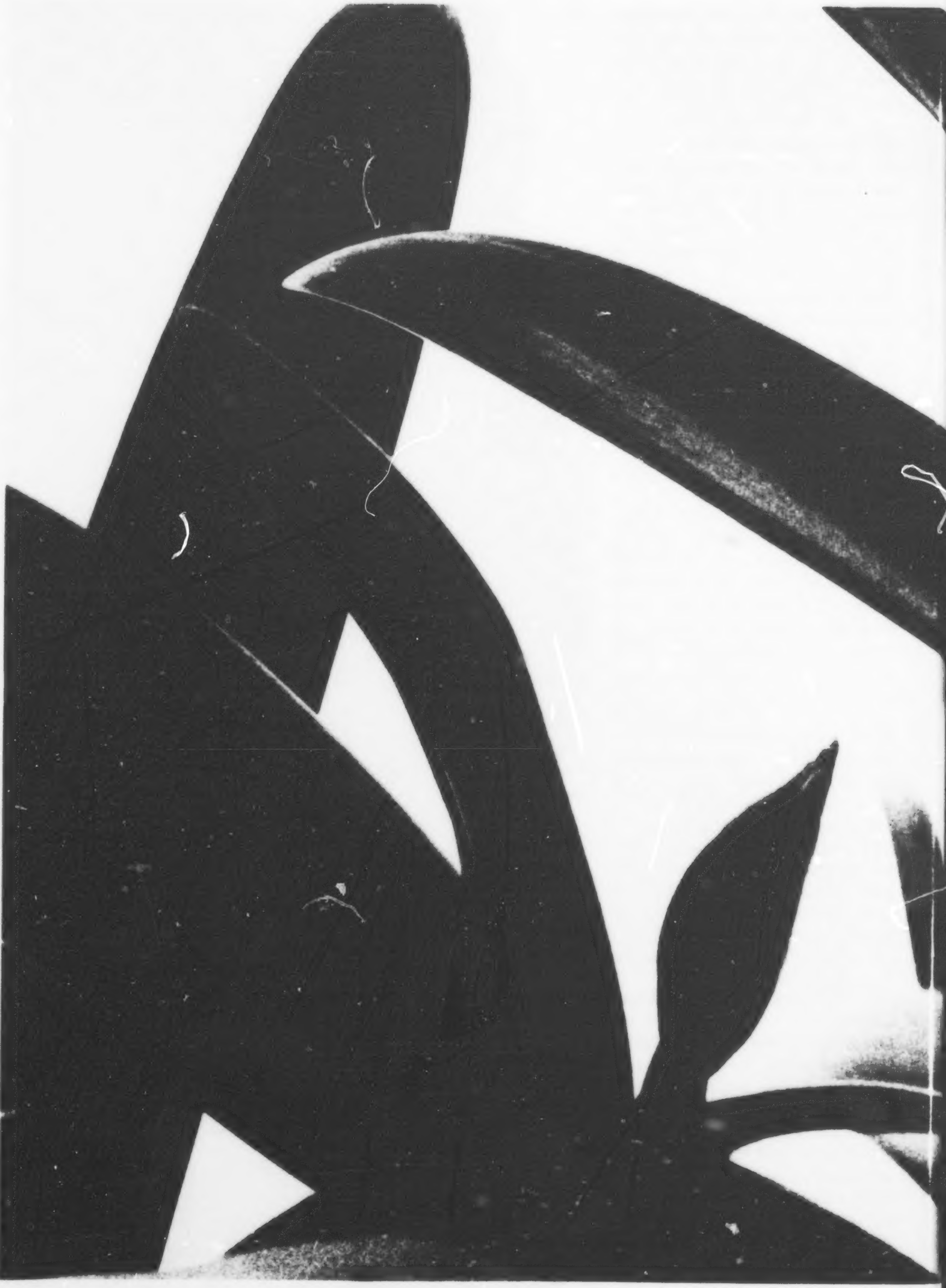
GF: Well, I certainly avoided it. I didn't follow up on the still-life paintings; I went back to the landscapes. But now these flowers are exhausting themselves. So now I'm thinking about taking up the questions raised in those whirling-fruit paintings. I'll have to see what develops. I may do more flowers. Who knows?

An exhibition of Gerald Ferguson's work will be held at the Grünwald Gallery, Toronto, from March 11 to April 1.

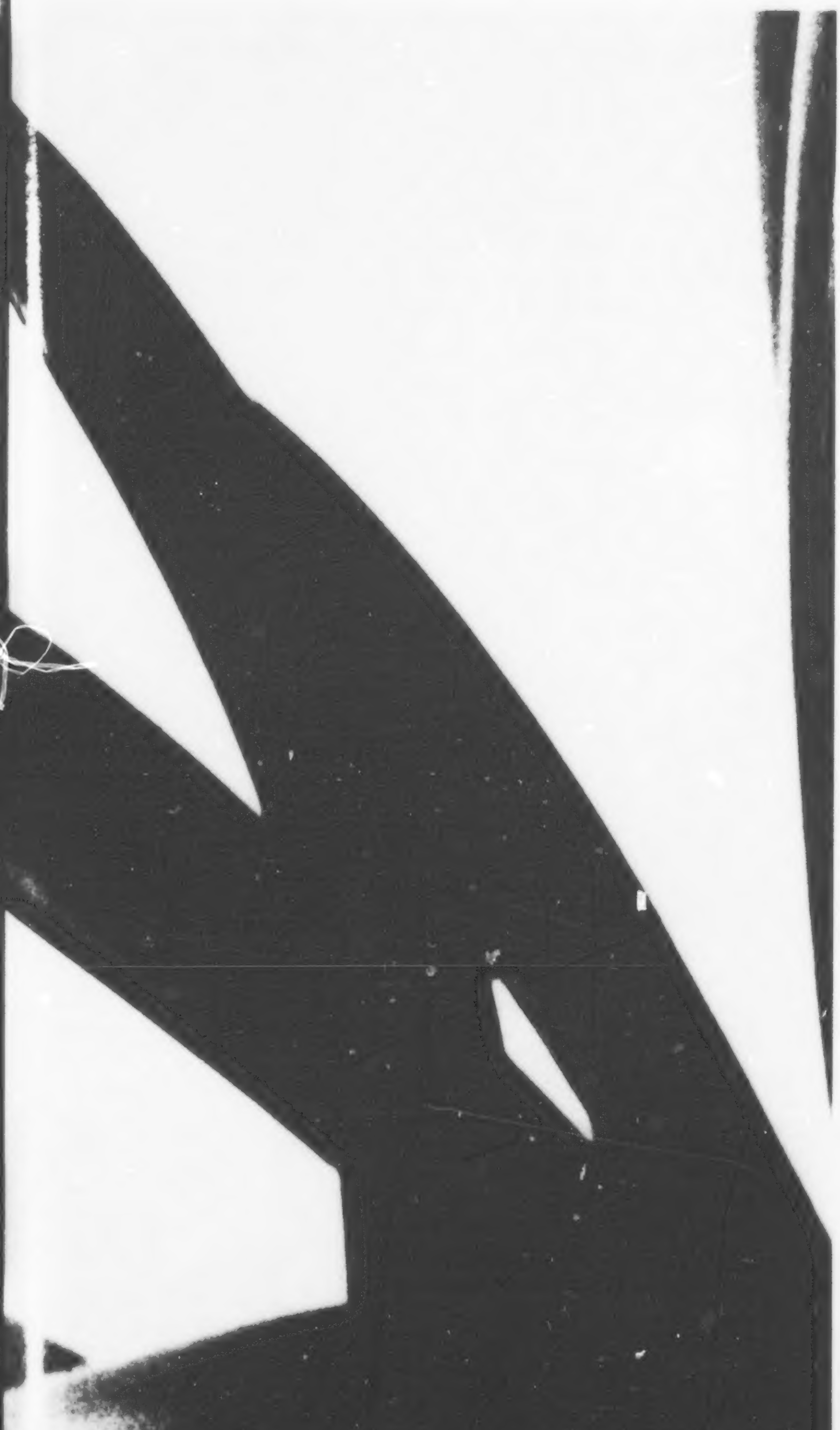
DETAIL FROM *THISTLES*
(1984), PENCIL ON
ACETATE, 4" X 6"

DETAIL FROM *THISTLES*
(1987), ACRYLIC ON
TARPAULIN, 29" X 42"

DETAIL FROM *THISTLES*
(1988), ACRYLIC ON
CANVAS, 11" X 16"



COURTESY JANE CORKIN GALLERY



PARADISE GAINED

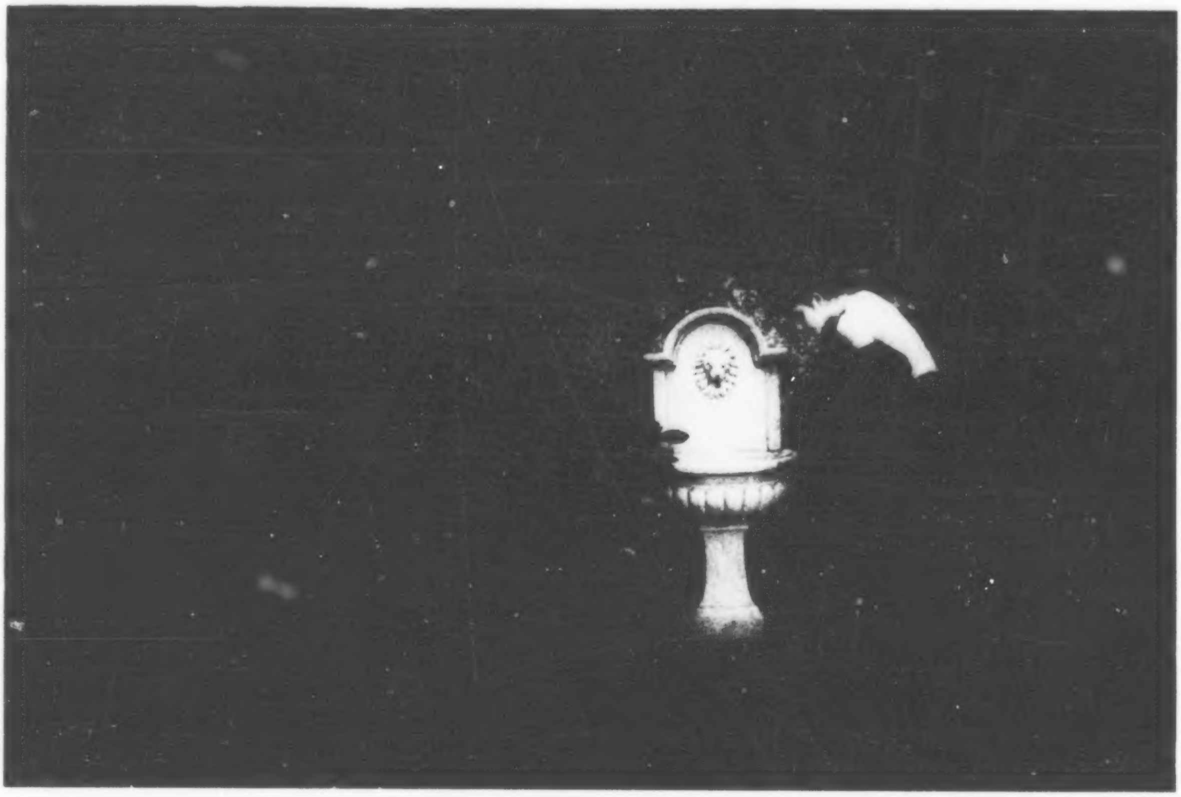
Ten photographers in search of the Edenic

What more can be said of gardens that hasn't already been expressed — in myth and poetry, novels and music, guidebooks, memoirs and travel literature; in film, drawings, snapshots, photo spreads and diagrams of The Perennial Border? Not much, perhaps. But the pleasure to be had from gardens, and gardening, seems inexhaustible, even if that only means to cheer on the tulip bulbs every spring or to marvel at a little, living patch of petit point across a lane — total pleasure, these, and for that reason to be celebrated, let alone for the rhythm, pattern and persistence of it all. For it's a wonder, now, when gardens and everything they signify are under siege, when every day brings news of environmental disaster, as far away as Brazil, as near as Vancouver Island — it seems miraculous, given smog, spills and chemicals, that anything manages to grow at all. So we cling to our paradises, grand and modest, fierce or formal, in close-up and in reflection, lush, thinning and spindly, composed and decomposing, peopled or bare of human traces — we record their images and read them for signs of our own survival. Where gardens go, we are sure to follow. *Adele Freedman*

CAROL MARINO
Leaves Of Polaroid, 1988

IAN PATERSON
Untitled, 1985, From *The Luxembourg Gardens* Series

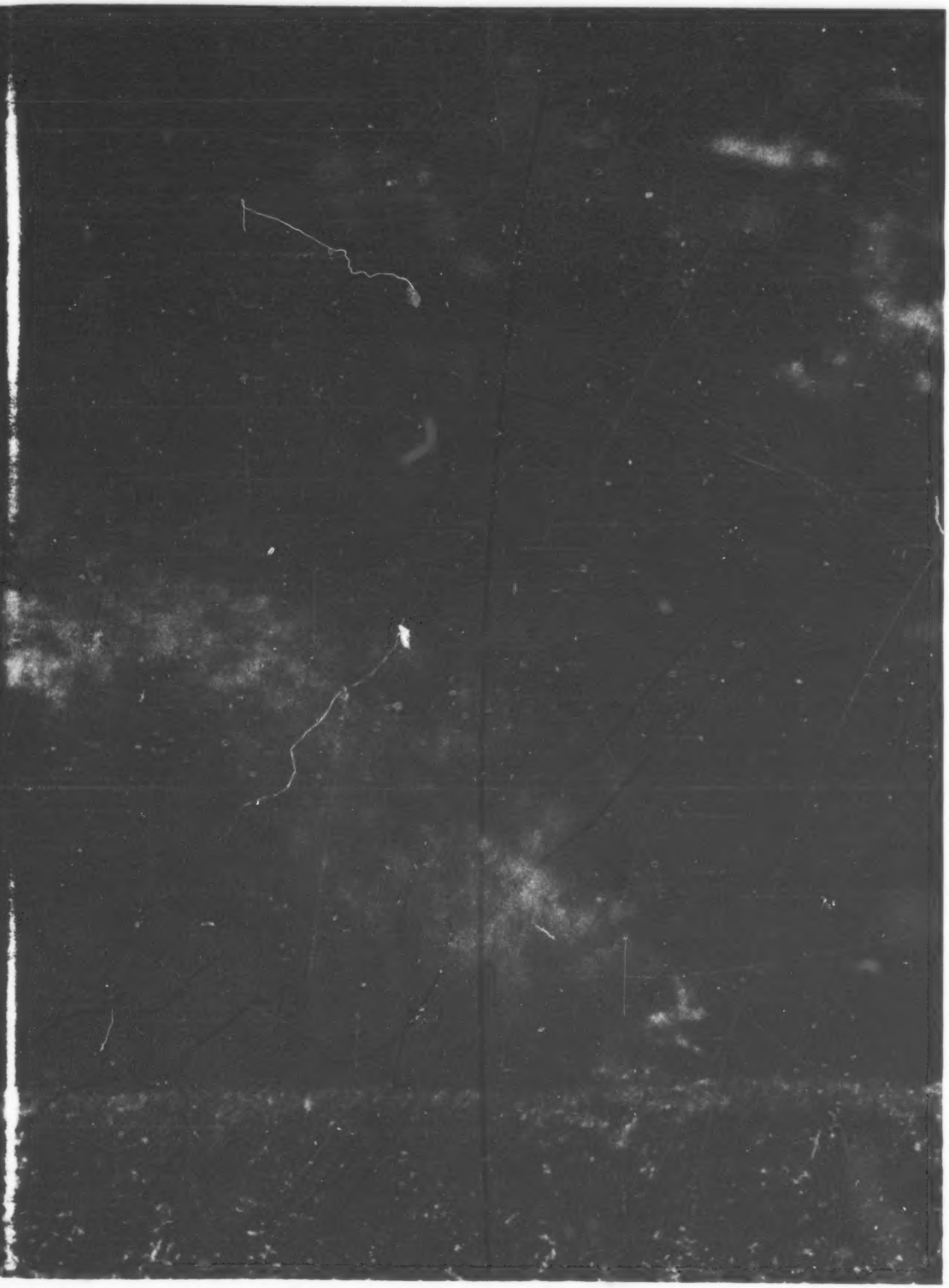
GEOFFREY JAMES
The Walter Hunnewell Estate, Wellesley, Mass., 1988

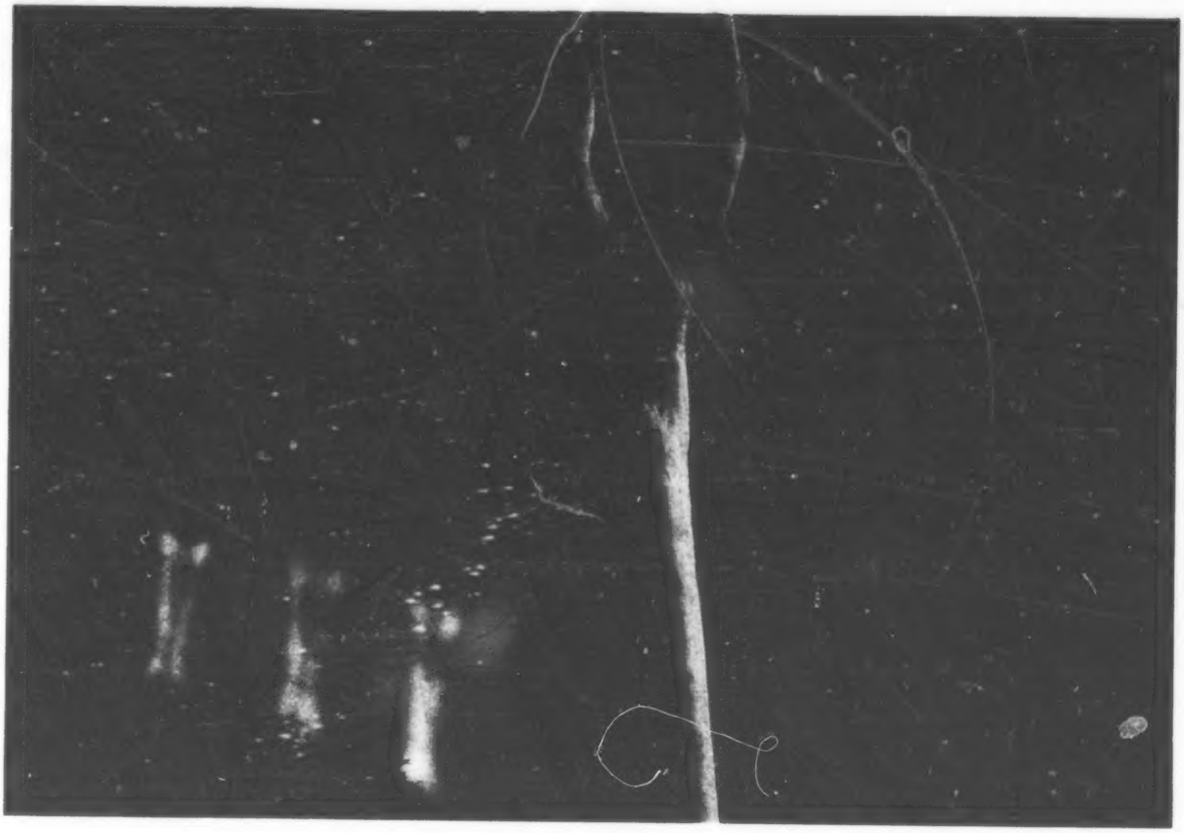


SHIN SUGINO
Untitled, 1988

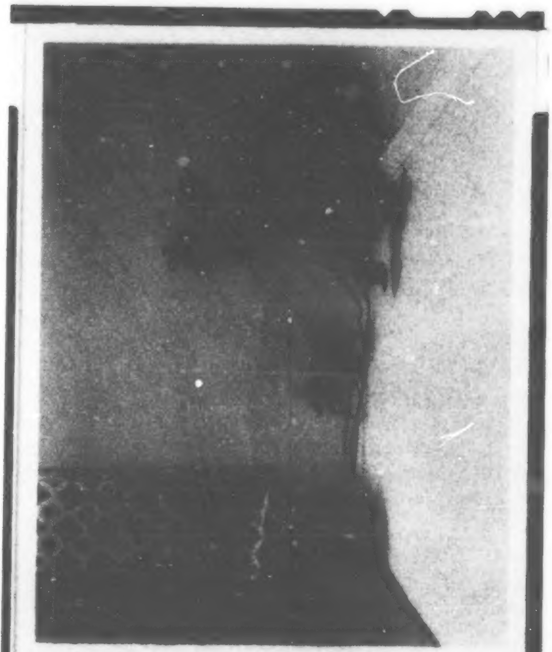
RUTH KAPLAN
Miriam Rosenstein, 1980

JAN (KOOT) WESTENDORP
Hidden Garden #9, 1987

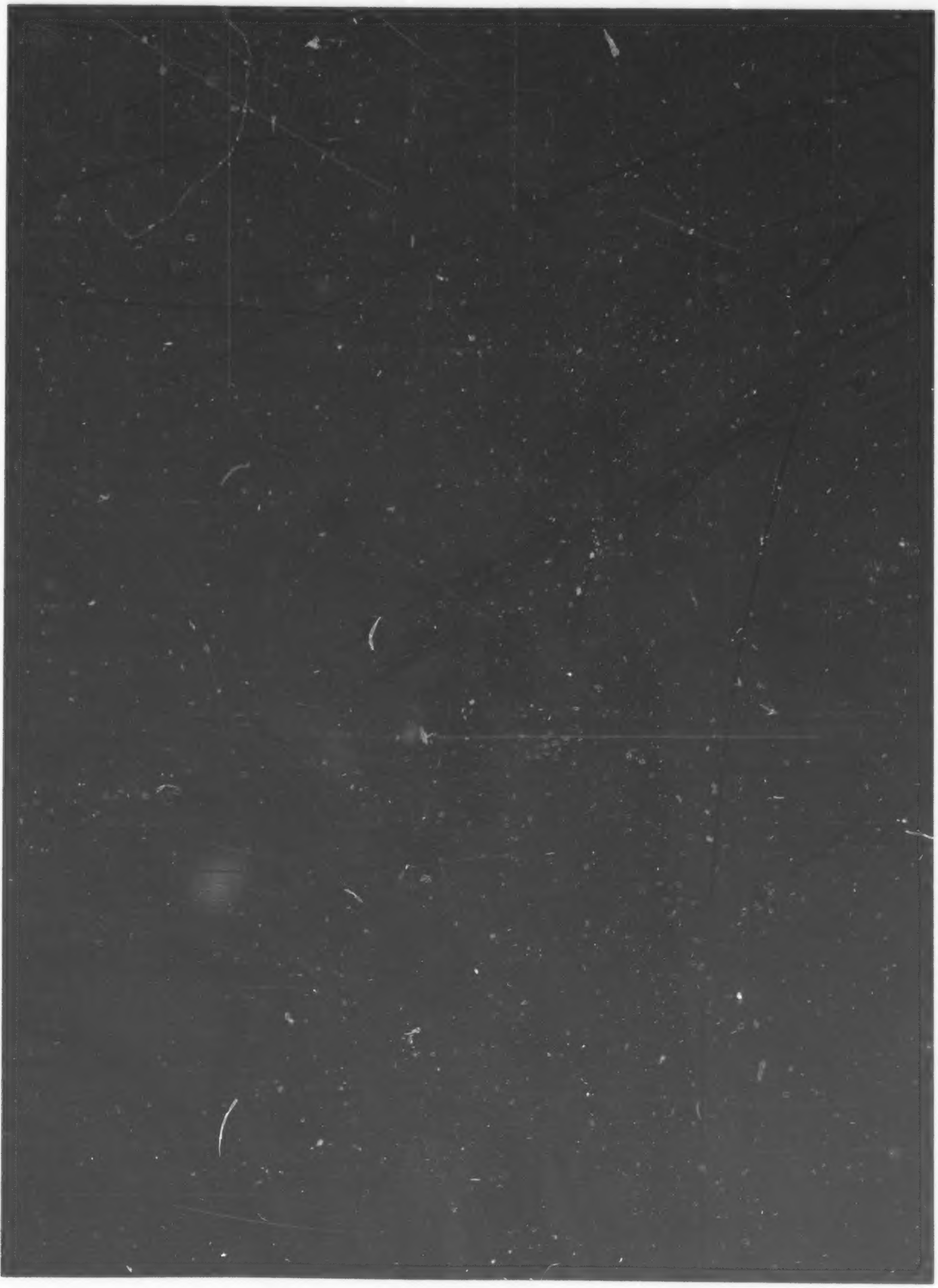




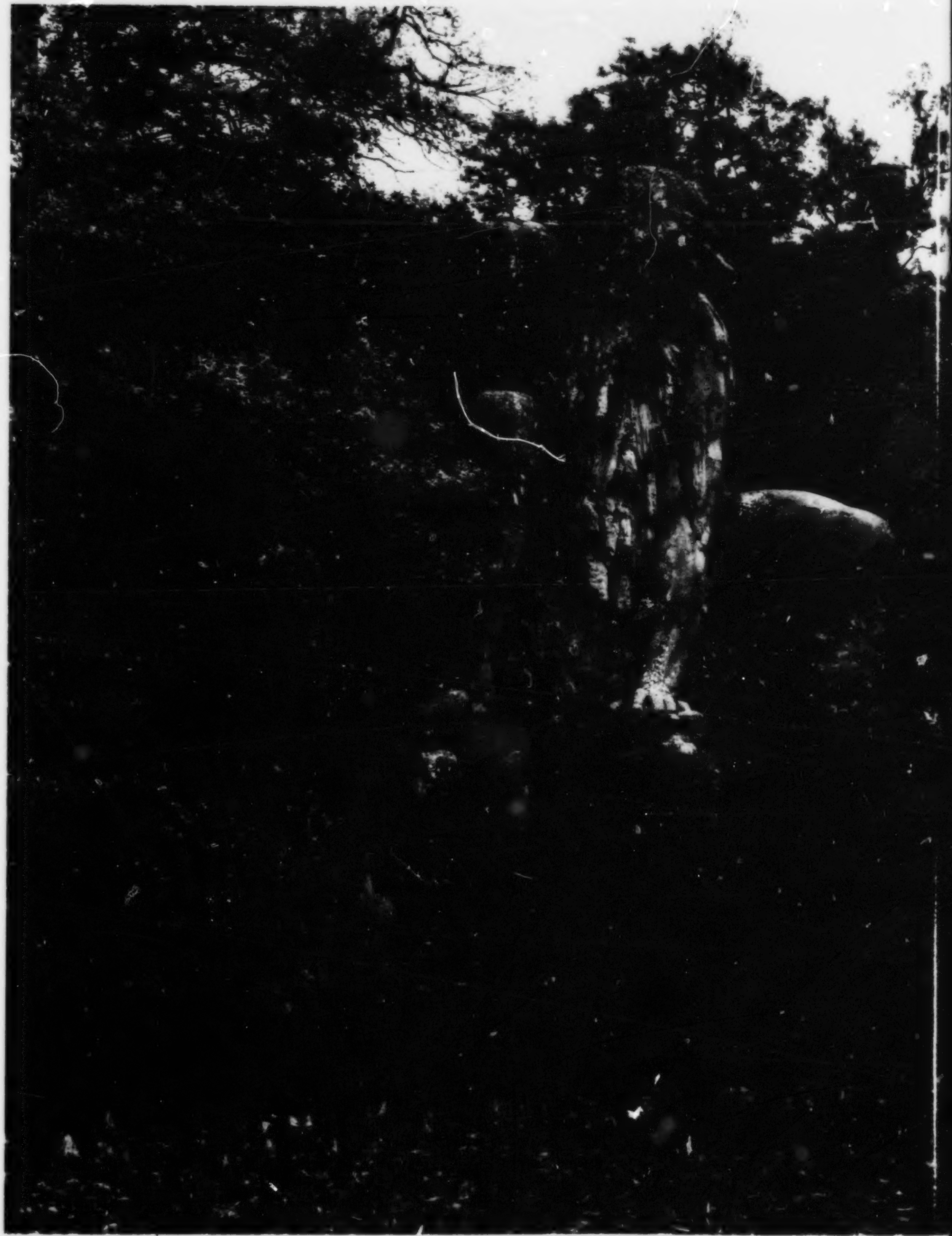
DAVID LAURENCE
Los Angeles, 1985



ROBERT KEZIERE
Interior (Large Plant), Probably Ay. Sostis, 1983



KATE WILLIAMS
Japanese Maple, 1980



MARCUS SCHUBERT
Figura Appenino, Villa Demidoff, Pratolino, Italy, 1985

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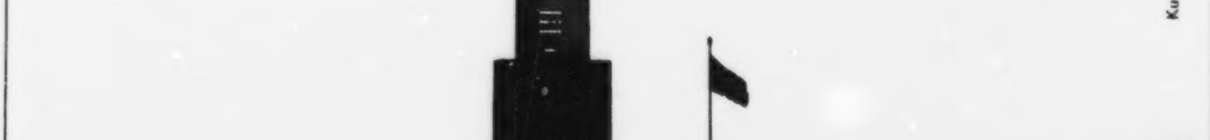

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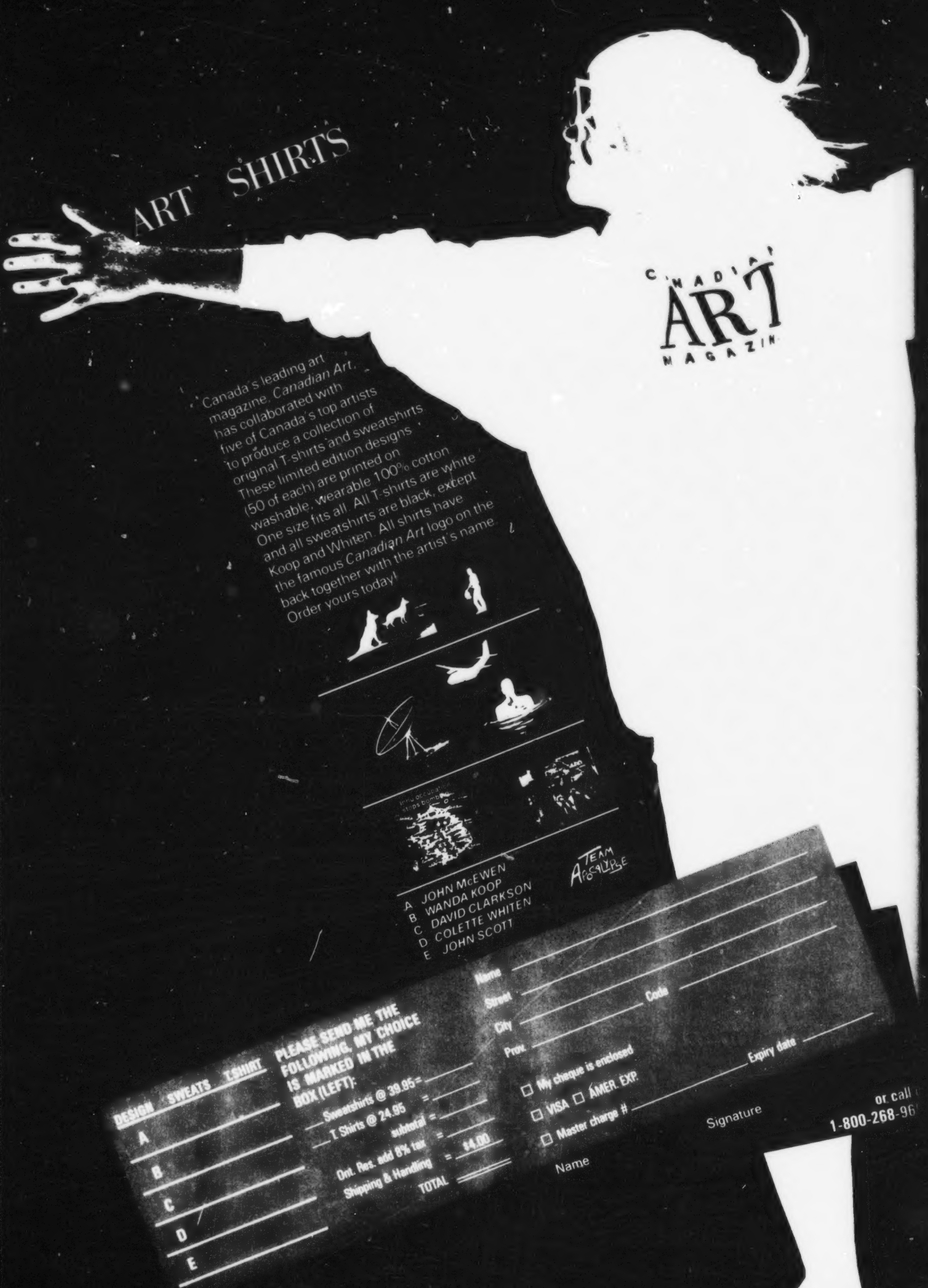

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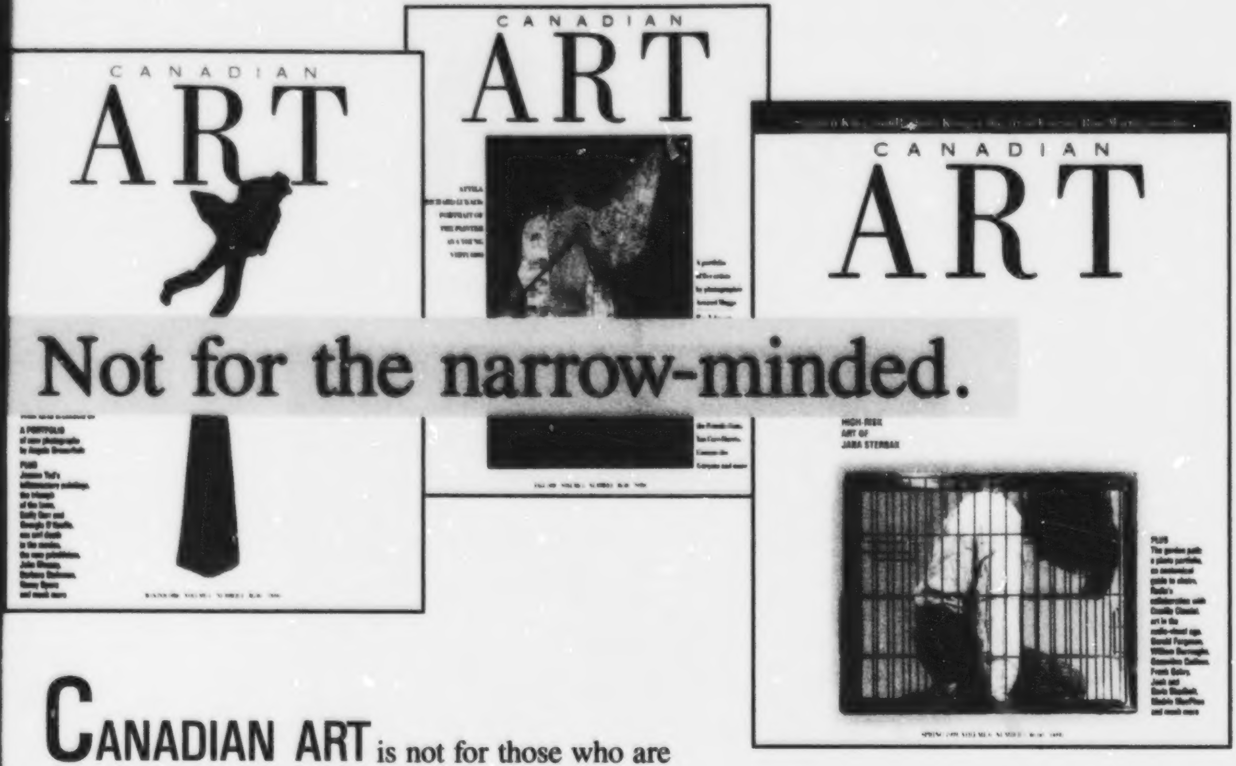

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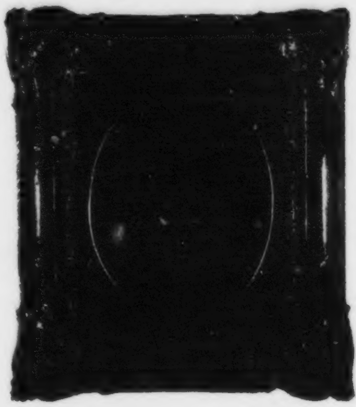
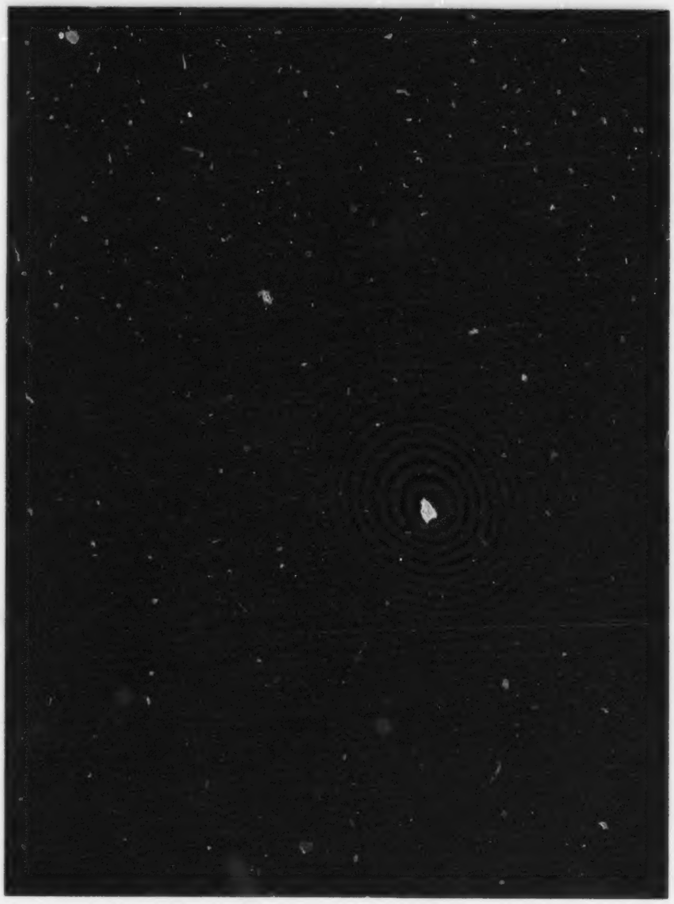


FOCUS

ON *LEOPOLD PLOTEK*



THE CITY'S FIERY PARCELS ALL UNDONE **(1987), OIL ON CANVAS, 93 ½" X 72 ½". COURTESY OLGA KORPER GALLERY**

The paintings Leopold Plotek showed in his October exhibition at Toronto's Olga Korper Gallery were his most powerful and disturbing to date. They were also among his most difficult and least ingratiating. Plotek's early work established him, 14 years ago, as a young painter to be reckoned with. His generously scaled paintings of the late '70s were essentially geometric (albeit non-Euclidean), constructed out of clean, discrete areas of color. Their imagery evoked architecture or, at least, rational structures, suggesting (though not literally depicting) entrances, arcades or the shift of light in a doorway. Plotek acknowledged these associations, saying that he was often surprised to discover, after the fact, that the configuration he had coaxed into being on canvas would sometimes recapitulate, without his having willed it, spaces and places that seemed to him particularly charged.

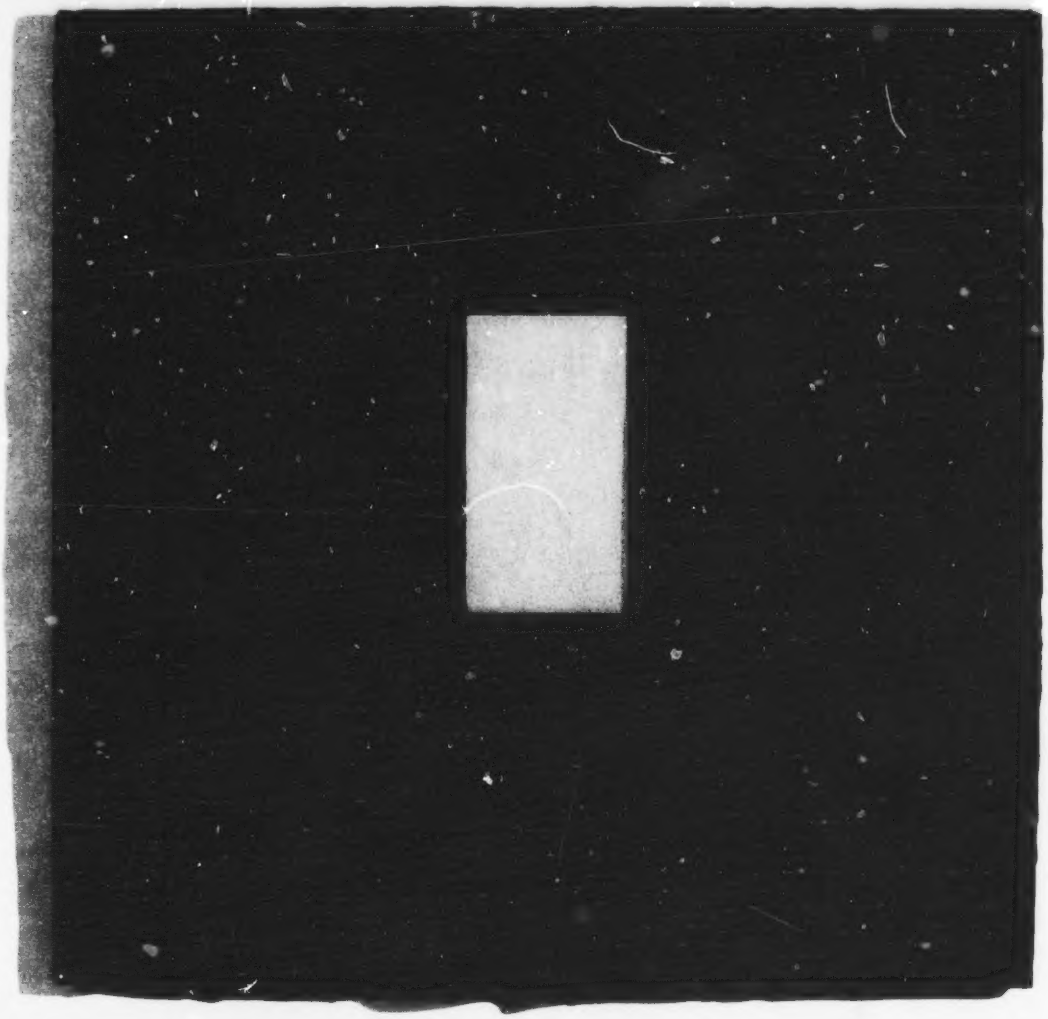
His recent paintings have the same expansive scale, the same uncanny sense of place and the same simultaneous sense of ample space and flat, painted surface, but their associations are richer and more disquieting. The places to which Plotek alludes seem less those of the external environment than of an internal landscape. It is difficult to locate yourself in these pictures. They draw you in and at the same time force you to keep your distance and consider them as independent objects.

Plotek's recent pictures are unsettling. He investigates an uneasy zone between limpidity and ambiguity, between autonomy and illusion. His dark, saturated palette has other associations, chiefly 16th-century Venice. Plotek seems to have one foot in the Italian Renaissance — he knows Italy well — and the other set firmly in 20th-century abstraction at its most ambitious.

This is, happily, unfashionable art: no cynicism, no appropriation, no text. It's about expressiveness in purely visual, painterly (which is not to say mindless) terms. A peevish Toronto reviewer, famous for his susceptibility to novelty, recently asked whether we needed Plotek's kind of painting. The answer is a resounding "yes." His intelligent, resonant pictures are some of the best we have.

Karen Wilkin

FOCUS ON *REGAN MORRIS*



***HIGHEST INTELLECT FROM AN INACCURATE REPRODUCTION* (1988), MIXED MEDIA, 73" X 74". COURTESY GARNET PRESS GALLERY**

Regan Morris's paintings are modules of reductivist simplification, attempts to forge a link between the spiritual and the physical in nature. The fabric that drapes in folds over the surface of the paintings is simulated animal skin, creating a memory of nature, while the centre of each painting is composed of insets in bright yellow, deep violet and brooding earth green. In *Highest Intellect* (1988), for example, the painting's chrome-yellow centre glows like a warming beacon of spiritual light. Surrounding it is a swaddling of ersatz elephant skin, a sharp critique on the continued use of endangered animals. Although Morris forms the paintings by layering caulking and latex and then staining the surface, the results are eerie in their close allusion to real hides. There are no subtleties here.

This combination of concerns undoubtedly stems from Morris's childhood memories of Rhodesia. His earlier works (1985-86) took the form of hunting trophies, recreating the hunters' lust to dominate nature. In Morris's show *Den Love* at the Garnet Press Gallery in 1987, these obsessions peaked with the exhibition of a fireplace constructed from simulated elephant parts — skin, tusks, feet — accompanied by objects (such as a rhino head trophy) made of simulated portions of a rhino. The exhibition marked the end of Morris's *Fear and Glamour* series, which exaggerated the seduction of pure excess to raise environmental issues.

In his latest paintings, Morris has scaled down his vision, a reaction to the physical uncertainty of the times. He has stopped making work about issues and now relies on a system of repetition and organization to address subjectivity in how we look at art. No longer does he use personal memories as a catalyst. Instead, he has turned the looking glass toward the spectator. What we see in the mirror is not only a reflection of our own preconceptions but also the associative properties of unmitigated color. *Linda Genereux*

FOCUS ON *MICHAEL BALSER*

STILL FROM *SURVIVAL OF THE DELIRIOUS* (1988). VIDEO, 15 MINUTES. PHOTO BY STEPHEN MARSHALL

Michael Balser's videotapes have generally managed to resist the pigeonholing all too typical of video curation and programming, and thus they have seldom been seen to their best advantage. Commencing with his initial tape, *Roberta/Interior Designer* (1981), Balser's perspective has been broadly humorous and often downright campy, a tone that frequently seems frivolous to those video programmers and viewers who prefer video to appear more formal and serious. His tapes are not as rooted in personal narrative as are those by the pioneers of Canadian narrative video (Colin Campbell, Lisa Steele); nor do they de-emphasize personal presence in favor of a self-consciously impersonal, high-tech production aesthetic (Dennis Day, Su Rynard). Balser's videos are not so much complete, self-contained entities as they are collages or compilations of parallel works, a format that allows various modes of video production to co-exist associatively rather than sequentially.

Balser's work has been consistently concerned with the body, especially in relation to media bombardments and to culturally prescribed gender roles. A tape such as *Any Hard Surface Will Do* (a 1984 collaboration with fellow video artist David MacLean) is unabashedly rooted in body/performance art. Other tapes such as *How Do They Make It Rain in the Movies* (1984) and *Fear of Everything in the Universe* (1987) present mass media (mainstream film production) as being hopelessly disorganized due to the lack of direct bodily (hands-on) involvement in the production process.

Balser's two most recent tapes, *Pogo Stick Porno Romp* (1987) and *Survival of the Delirious* (1988) were made in collaboration with figurative painter/catalyst Andy Fabo. Both artists, as politically and culturally active gay men, are concerned with the survival of the figure/body in this contemporary environment of corporal, environmental and cultural pollution. *Survival of the Delirious* in particular achieves a unity between computer-generated imagery, nature or landscape settings and the viscerality of Fabo's superimposed drawings. In contrast to many artists' videotapes, which concentrate on fetishizing production and post-production technology at the expense of whatever bodies lie within the video frame, *Survival of the Delirious* asserts the body in its advocacy of a necessary co-existence.

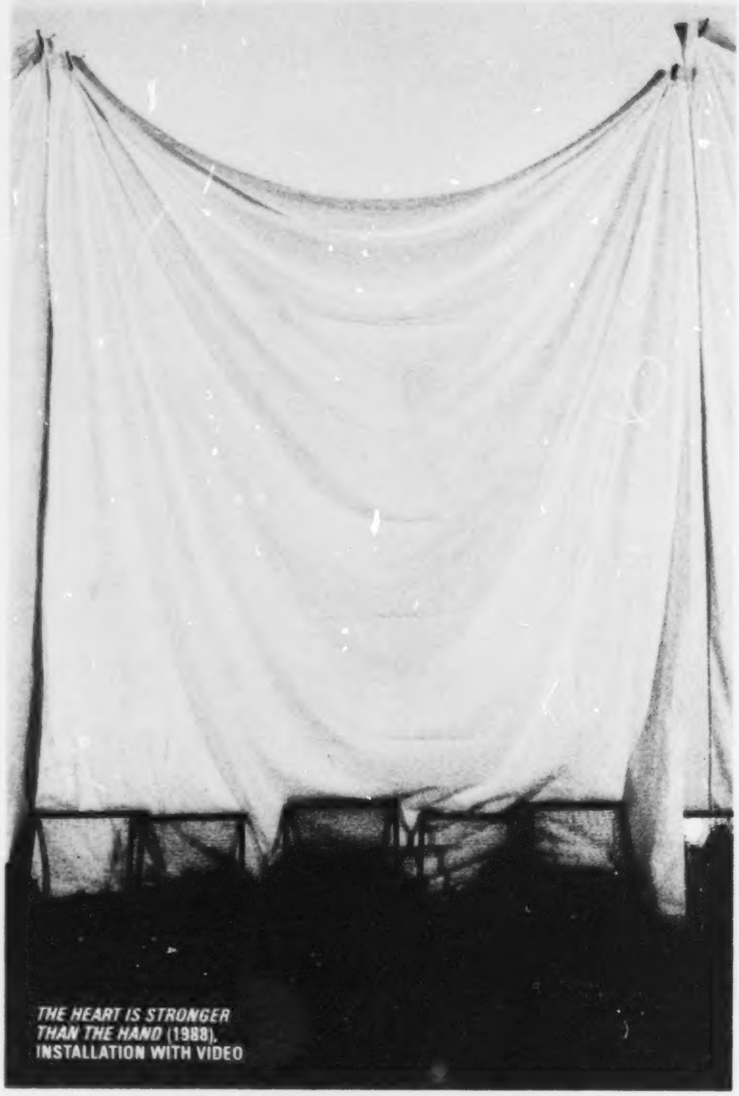
Andrew J. Paterson

*F*OCUS

ON *LANI MAESTRO*

Lani Maestro produces compassionate, politically motivated art work that is generated from subjective experience. Since moving to Canada six years ago, she has given voice to the people of her native Philippines, who have been silenced by a series of violent, repressive governments. "My recent works deal with circumstances that I have been direct witness to — those of torture and disappearances," says Maestro. "Dealing with these issues in my art is a way of confronting the fear. It is also a tribute to people whose lives have been erased because of their political beliefs."

The Heart Is Stronger Than The Hand (at the Anna Leonowens Gallery in Halifax last April and Calgary's « »dL Gallery last December) was motivated by Maestro's feelings of displacement and alientation, both in her homeland and in Canada, feelings that arose during a return visit to the Philippines in 1987. She met with peasants, community workers and sugar workers, and witnessed an environment where evictions, massacres, disappearances and acts of torture had become a way of life. In the show, says Maestro, "I try to validate other people's direct experience of this violation by relating the story of their lives as they affect me as a Filipina in exile."



THE HEART IS STRONGER THAN THE HAND (1988), INSTALLATION WITH VIDEO

Maestro's vivid installations associate symbolic images and narrative texts within spare, ritualistic settings. Rectangular shadows (snapshots of mutilated bodies) are faintly discernible beneath white bedsheets — their skirts bordered by dried maple leaves — which are draped like curtains along opposite walls of the gallery. In an intimate corner, framed texts present childhood recollections of painful bodily injuries that were soothed by an elderly nanny who practiced faith healing. These memories of youthful innocence, juxtaposed with the fear and panic induced by fleshly harm, mimic the responses of a viewer whose relatively innocent experience cannot penetrate the corporeal injustices Maestro discloses. The shroudlike sheets both protect the dead from our voyeuristic gaze and shield us from the horror these images hold, reinforcing the separation that exists between distinct situations and countries, the gap between death and life.

Maestro's work exists not only as a distressing testimony to inhumane acts, but also as a shrine for mourning and reflection. Alarming revelations are calmed in an atmosphere of silence as video images of ocean waves, swelling hypnotically against a shoreline, suggest the eternal cleansing of a wound. A woman's voice whispers a register of names, victims of involuntary disappearances. A modest shrine of plants, seeds, rocks and human hair beckons the viewer to examine it from a kneeling position. Nearby, the word "FAITH" is marked on the wall with a bold assortment of dried flowers. The entire work provokes viewers to acknowledge the instability of human morality and existence, while considering their own physical mortality.

In Maestro's view, the process of art holds transformative potential for both maker and spectator. She creates a location where the interaction of political issues — gender, class and race — intertwines with personal conditions of everyday life. Maestro remains truthful to herself in her struggle to find poetic images of ritual and mourning for life in the Philippines, bringing this vulnerable situation closer to our hearts and minds.

Donna McAlear

FOCUS

ON *MEDRIE MACPHEE*

SIAMESE TWINS **(1987), OIL ON CANVAS, 58" X 70". COURTESY MIRA GODARD GALLERY**

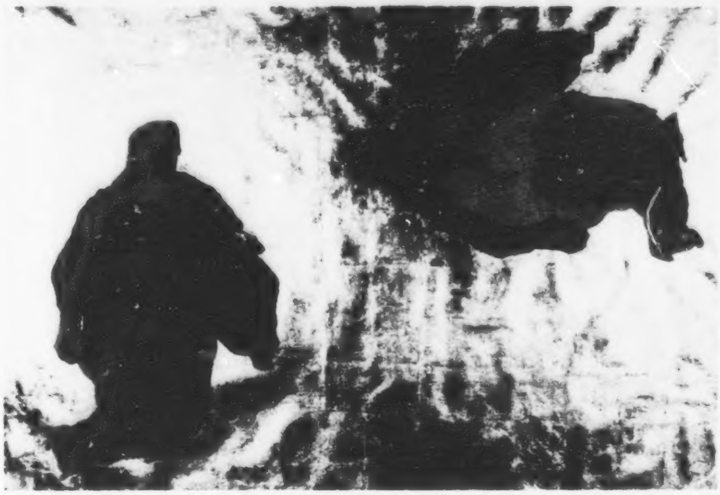
Medrie MacPhee is a lucid and careful painter. Although her pictures are striking and her subjects huge, they are laid down with rectitude and restraint. She engages the canvas with tact. The pictures that emerge in MacPhee's Brooklyn studio take a long time to be born. Previous work remains in the studio to inform the present. The pictures are manufactured as well as painted. If there is a passage in one of these massive and voluminous industrial landscapes that the artist does not like, she may simply stitch on a fresh piece of canvas: "A couple of times, I was working on something and felt frustrated, so I sewed on more canvas to create more scenes."

It is the bolder hand of the draftsman that first appears in these strong pictures. The edges of the structures are hard, the drawn line defining the mighty volumes of MacPhee's space. Ladders provide the scale in *Study for Ark* (1985) and again in *Siamese Twins* (1987), while in *Alchemy* (1987), tiny balustrades imply the vastness of the space. And it is here, under the artist's impossible canopy of fictitious glass, that we enter that realm of the imagined that has led to comparisons with Piranesi. In fact, MacPhee's own words evoke a sense of kinship with the visionary quality of Piranesi's imagined structures. "I like these individual scenes because they are like secret places at the fringes of all cities," says MacPhee. "I see them as portraits of themselves. I see them as characters — abstract individuals in space."

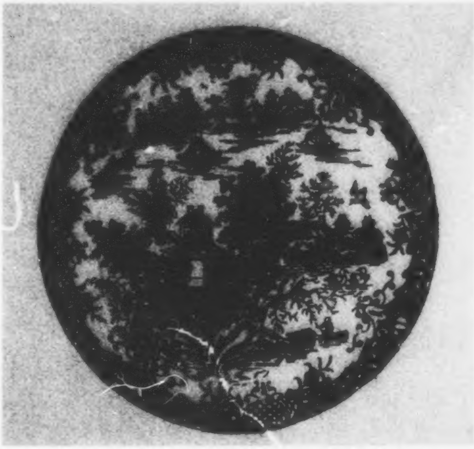
All of this is enlivened on the picture plane, where the artist's painterly intent is manifest. MacPhee's path toward a fuller chromatic range has left delightful footprints. These surfaces are full of invention. Colbalt defines an arc of the monstrous wheel in *Alchemy*; a spill of mauve and crimson puddles on the floor. "If you're relying on the image to carry the whole picture," MacPhee insists, "if the language of the paint is not interesting and original in itself, it's not enough. I am a painter. I'm not a photographer."

Matthew Hart

FOCUS ON *JACK ANDERSON*



AFTER IMAGE **(1987), ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 52" X 73"**



BLUE WILLOW **(1987), ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 33" X 33"**

Marcel Duchamp would be amused. He used his found objects and ready-mades to gently question the institutionalization of avant-garde conventions at the height of modernism, the cubist epoch. Jack Anderson has adroitly transformed these tactics to confront the postmodern present. Born in Lethbridge in 1949, Anderson worked for several years in Calgary before moving to Regina. His works, like those of Duchamp, are diverse and eclectic, seductively familiar, yet imbued with mystery and ambiguity, humorous and ironic rather than didactic or rhetorical. All defy the stylistic continuity with which we limit and classify art and artists. Rather, they cover a wide range: collaborative performances (particularly with Calgary artist John Will), installations, sculpture, paintings and prints. His work exists at the crossroads of high art and kitsch, the contemporary and the historical, the individual and the cultural.

Anderson's most recent installation, *Plates from an Encyclopaedia* (1987 and ongoing), takes on the concept of language-based structures and our desire for a closed system of ordered knowledge. The images — both paintings and mixed-media collages — are appropriated from a variety of sources, but appear as random and heterogeneous as illustrations in an encyclopaedia: precisely drawn maps of the world, rigorous botanical diagrams, meticulously rendered china plates, painterly calligraphic cartoons, kitsch wallpaper samples and pulp magazine covers, pointillist interiors and gold-leaf religious icons.

While an encyclopaedia is ordered according to the alphabet, with a text that places the images in context, the images in Anderson's work are free-floating and random. What amounts to an invisible text is represented by these arbitrary excerpts from Anderson's memory. Indeed, the absent text may well be the major work, in that it signals the lack of continuity that constitutes contemporary culture. *Leslie Dawn*

FOCUS ON *RIC EVANS*

***UNTITLED: GREEN/YELLOW* (1988), OIL ON CANVAS, 80" X 57"**

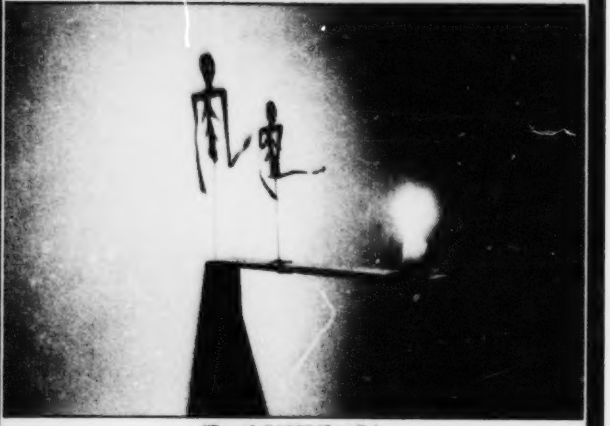
KEN ELLIOTT

After three years of experimenting with color paintings positioned at the threshold of landscape painting, Ric Evans has returned to a more obviously constructivist-based picture-making. The new works consist of two abutted panels, each of them different in shape, color and surface. The color is applied directly, if not spontaneously, and is often vectored through its field by the addition of passages of shallow ribbing (as in the yellow panel seen here). Some of the paint is brushed and glossy (the deep Thalo green panel at the left), some of it is as uninflected and as matte as a blackboard (as in the black tab connecting the dark green and yellow panels above). Individual planes of the pictures are sometimes left in a state of chromatic irresolution, where, for example, both a yellow and a yellow-green compete for dominance within an unresolved and casually variegated field. These are unapologetically hedonistic surfaces. "I'm having more enjoyment in the act of painting," Evans says, "than I've ever had before."

Common to all of the new paintings is their exaggerated sense of doubleness, twoness, of a residual symmetry that appears to have existed once and then been dislocated, perhaps as a function of the renegade action of the painter's taste acting upon the givens of geometry. All of the pictures are vertical ("I've never painted a horizontal painting in my life," Evans says) and all of them are manifested in a scale that echoes the size and stance of the human body. The pairing of the panels around what is invariably a centrally located vertical division, a spine (or spinal chord, chromatically speaking), reinforces their being read anthropomorphically. This is not a reading Evans resists. "I find myself thinking about each painting as a skeleton," he admits. "Each of them appears to have a good side and a bad side, a smooth side and a rough side, and so on. Each of them has a personality for me, as well as mere characteristics." For Evans, the rawness of the paintings, their busy, demanding surfaces, their eccentric shapes, act together as a presentation of effects that serves to draw the viewer into an increasingly intimate confrontation with the works, a confrontation that, considering their anthropomorphism, could be said to modulate into dialogue.
Gary Michael Dault

CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI

LESSONS OF DARKNESS



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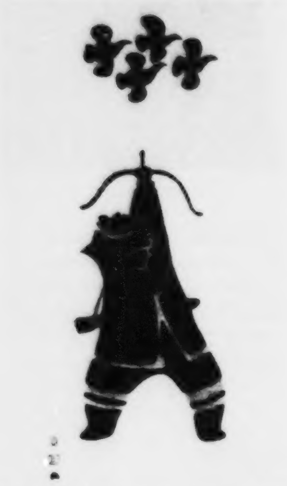

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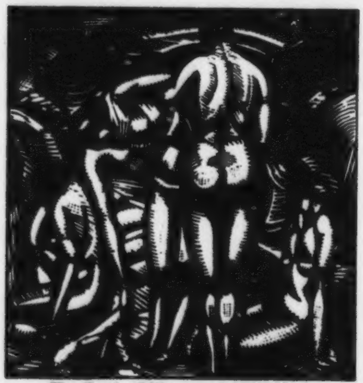

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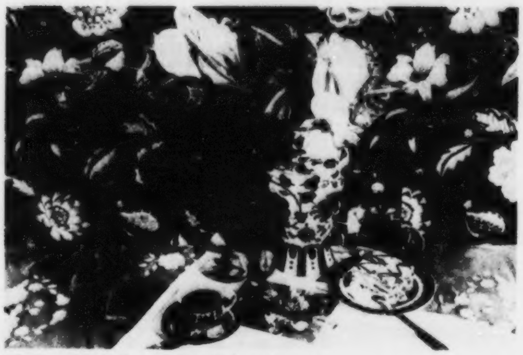

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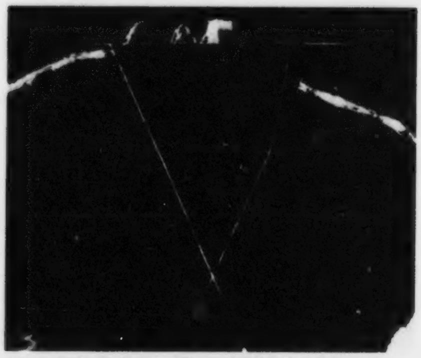

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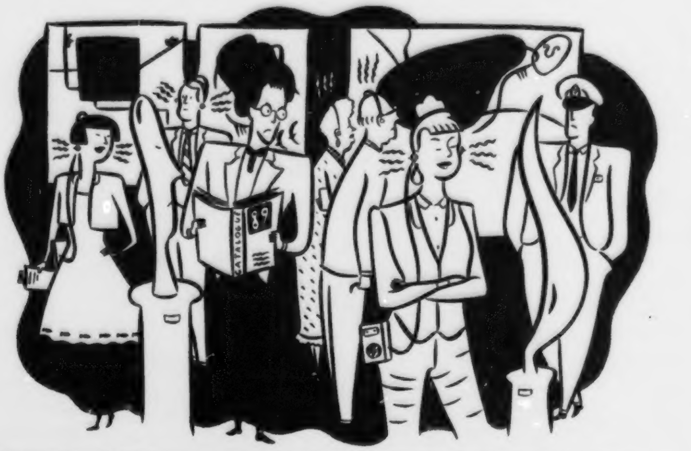

SETH

IGNORANCE IS BLISS: NOTES ON ART IN THE AUDIO-VISUAL AGE

Acoustiguides are getting harder and harder to miss. The ultimate talismans of the '80s blockbuster art boom, they are those tape decks and headsets rented out at museums to tell people what it is that they are looking at. You notice them — even if you yourself are without one — by the fact that most of the people around you:

1. are emitting strange, chattering sounds as if invisible swarms of microchips were buzzing round their heads (the Acoustiguide tends to spill its sound into other people's space);
2. are suspiciously intent on the same painting, even though other, perfectly good paintings surround it (Acoustiguides pre-select your aesthetic epiphanies for you);
3. will all be more than likely to stand on your foot (Acoustitouring does not do wonders for people's sense of spatial relationships).

These things alone have been enough to put me off for years. But on the verge of seeing *Degas* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art last winter, I felt the urge for the first time. The exhibition was rumored to be enormous, definitive, exhaustive and — more to the point — exhausting. Perhaps an Acoustiguide would help.

It didn't. Instead, what I experienced was a kind of Jane Fonda Workout of the aesthetic sensibilities, with the corresponding longing for it all to be over ("...five more...four more"). And like the dynamic of the workout studio, the "rush" depends on one's desire to relinquish authority to another, to be subsumed into a mass, to let someone else make decisions for you. These are not my greatest strengths, particularly when the authority figure in question is the Met's director, Philippe de Montebello, sounding as if he sold Columbian coffee in another life.

By the time I had "done" *Degas* an hour later, I had sworn off Acoustiguides forever. First of all, it's tough to face the humiliation of finding yourself staring at the "wrong" painting (it's amazing where you can find a pyramid composition when you need to). Presumably my performance could be improved with practice. More frustrating was the thick porridge of biographical background, salted with invocations to observe the delicate play of brush strokes and the like, a way of looking at art that I thought hadn't been practiced since Berenson turned in his monocle.

But my argument here is not really with the content of these tours. No doubt some are better than others. What really bothers me is the way they physically intervene in our relationship not only with art works but with museums themselves. For better or for worse, a museum is a place where one does a lot of different things (in addition to gleaning biographical tidbits on artists). Like talk about things *other* than art. Like commune in silence. Like bask in the extraordinary architectural space. To all of these the Acoustiguide says, "No! Proceed to the next salon, rear wall, third painting on your left!" Space collapses around you like shrink wrap. Your sense of self erodes. You become a receptor, a receiver of received ideas.

In fairness, the Acoustitour does inform you that it can be turned off at any time that you choose to detour, but the voice inside your head so dominates any objects out there that the reminder, in the end, is a mere formality. Something — your own pace, perhaps, or your ability to establish your own relations with things — has been lost.

The alternative — independence — can be intimidating, it's true. But standing in front of a work of art in a state of baffled indeterminacy is one of the greatly underrated, mind-building experiences. Acoustiguides are popular because (and here Jane Fonda rears her wizened head again) they tap into our relentless appetite for self-improvement ("Keener insights in just one hour!"). Confusion, however creative, is something to be briskly sorted out and filed away. But I would argue that one of the wonderful things about being in a museum is the sense you have of being surrounded by a lifetime's worth of things you *don't* know all about, the sense that you are — no matter how much you know — gloriously adrift just out beyond your depth (and the more you learn, the more true this becomes). By getting what seems to be all the answers, you run the risk of never asking any questions.

There are no doubt some who will find this argument elitist. Acoustiguides make art more accessible to the public and are, therefore, A Good Thing. To this I prescribe the traditional remedy: The Catalogue. One *could* read. But if it's really all too much, the Metropolitan now offers Acoustitours of catalogues too ("... please turn to page 291, plate 175..."). And if this doesn't help, maybe you should consider a final option: maybe you should just stay home.

Sarah Milroy

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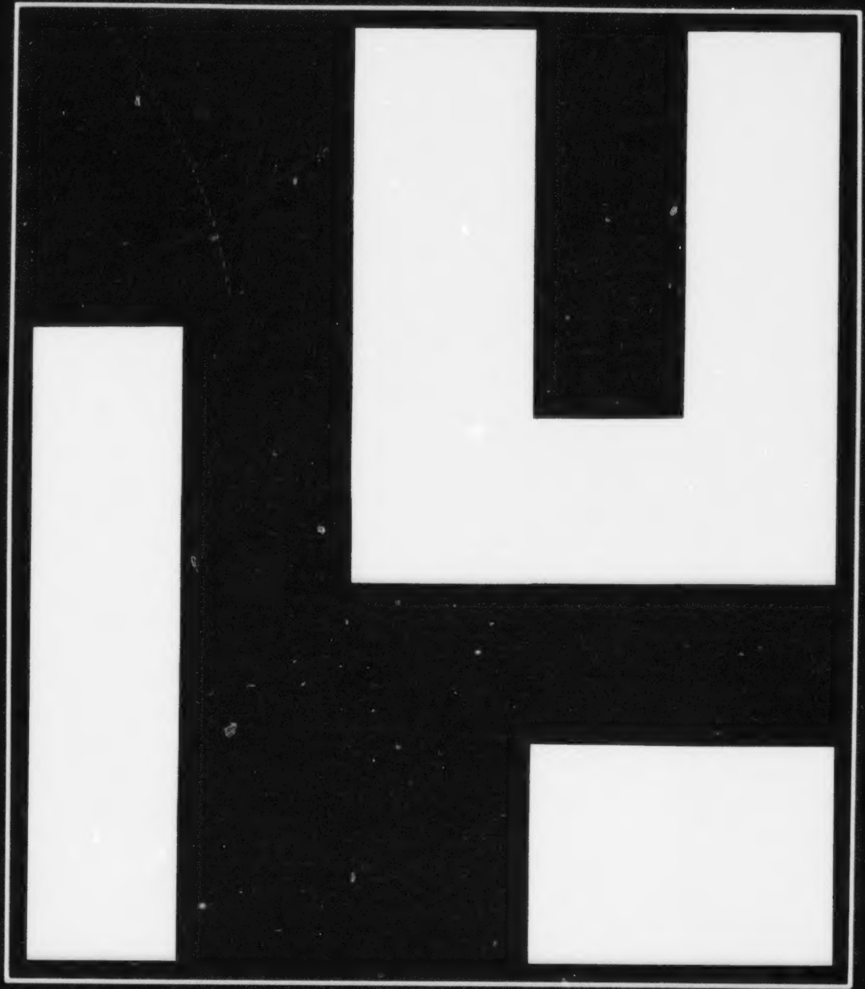

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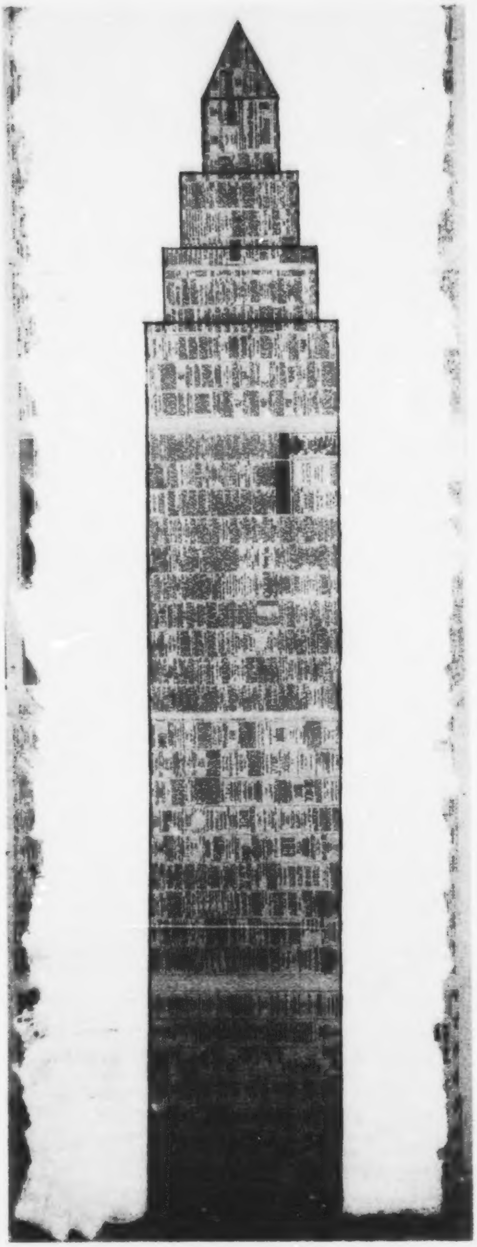

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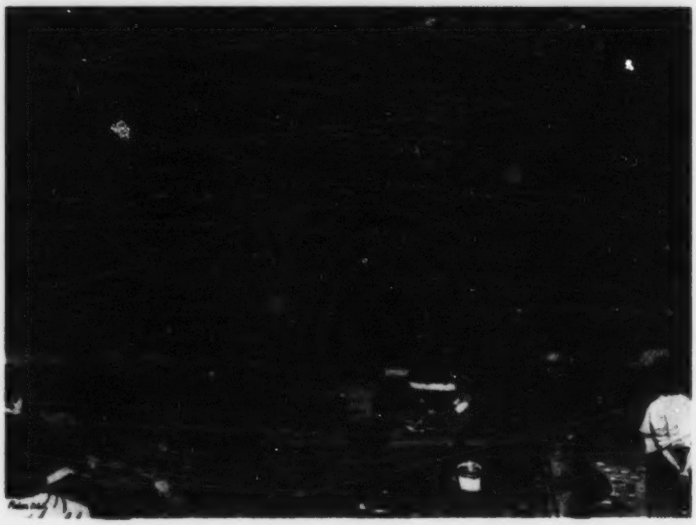

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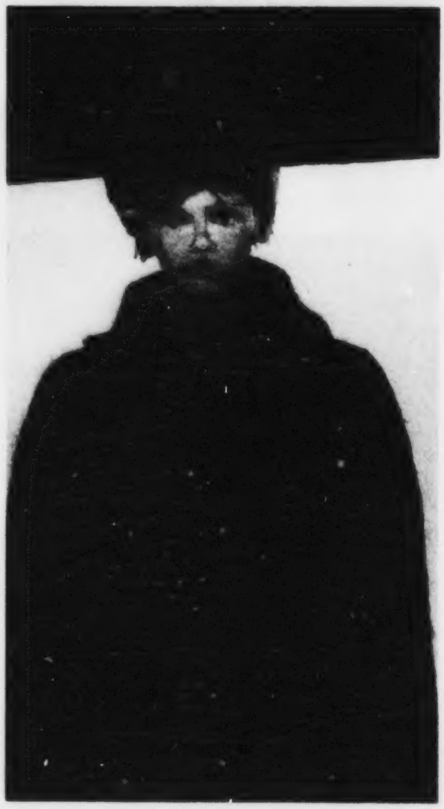

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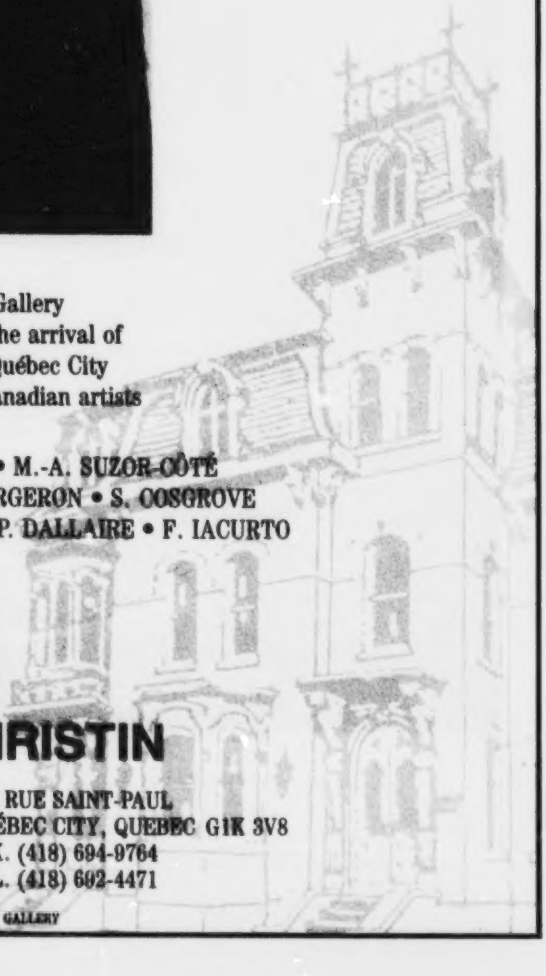

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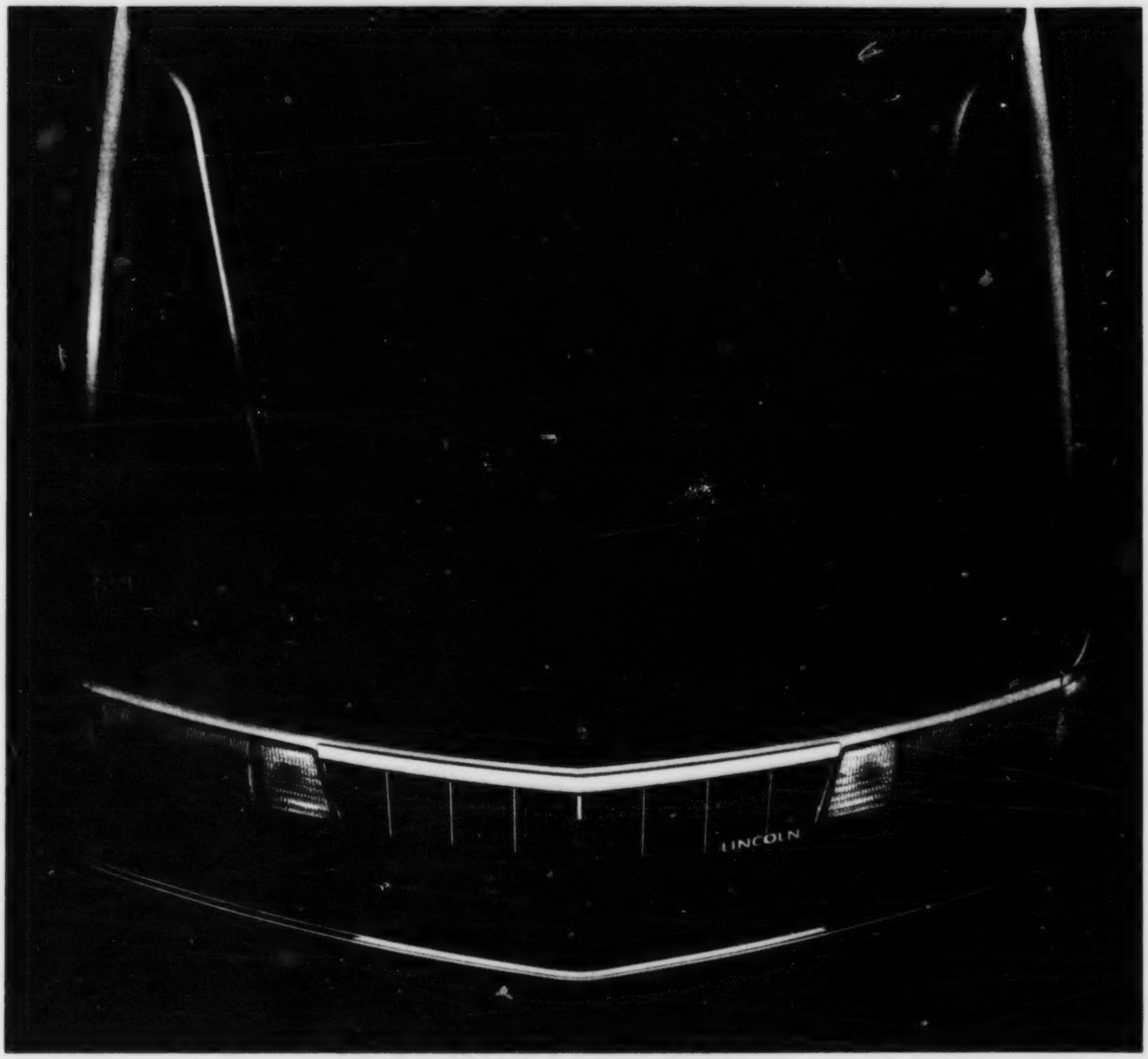

Ford

QUALITY IS JOB 1.

CANADIAN ART

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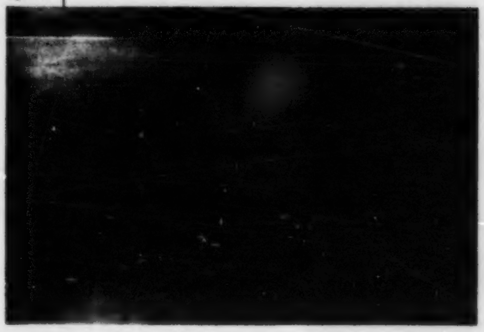

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CANADIAN
ART

Volume 6, Number 2
Summer/June 1989

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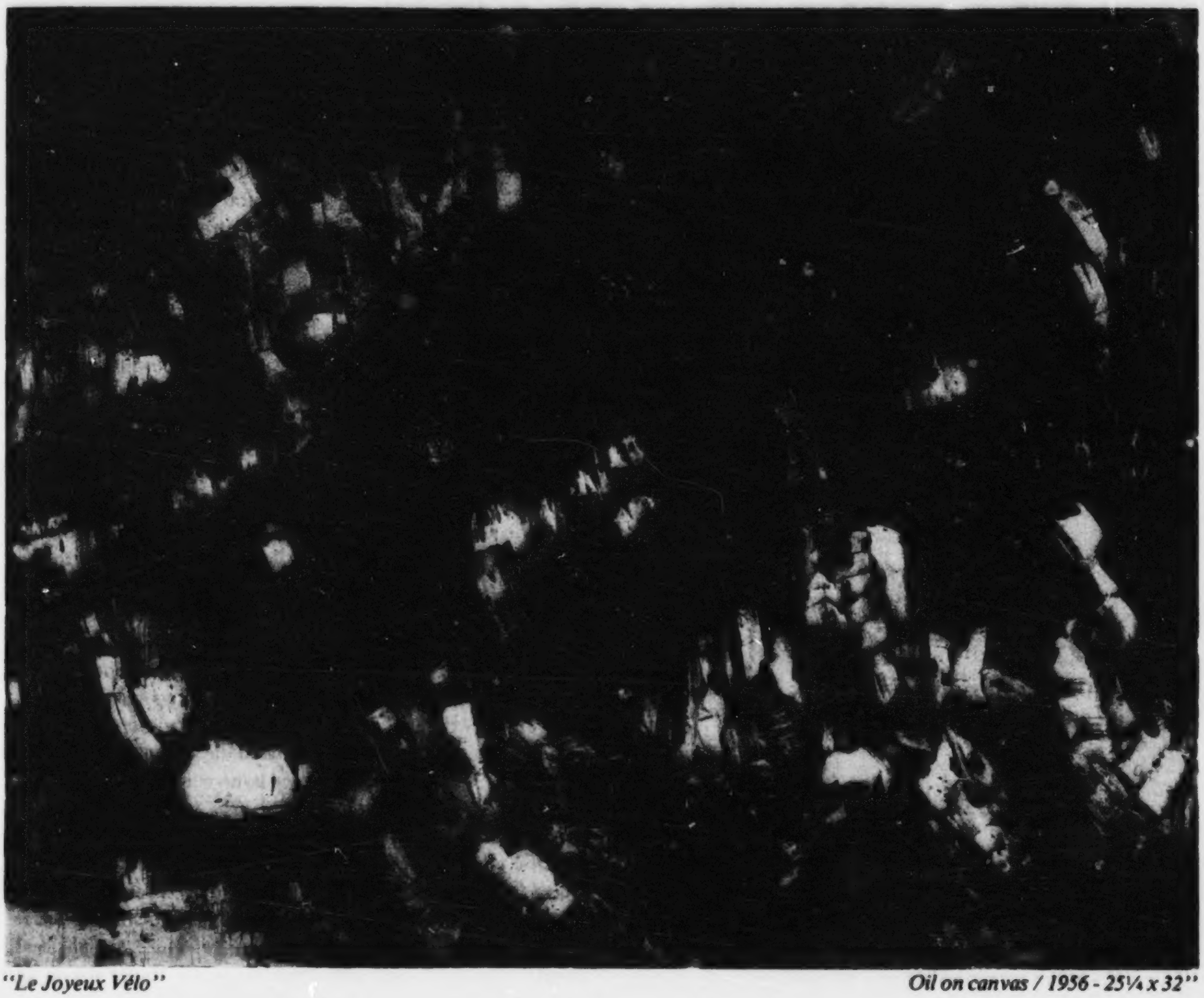
Cover: Gar Smith
I Give Bliss, I Give Warning **1982-85**
Drawing from an installation
Acrylic, oil stick on *New York Times* newspaper
22 x 60 in.
Photo: Hal Roth

JEAN-PAUL RIOPELLE



"Le Joyeux Vélo" *Oil on canvas / 1956 - 25¼ x 32"*

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EDITORIAL

For some time now, architecture has been treated not only as a profession but also as an art form. Like New York's Max Protetch Gallery, Ballenford Architectural Books in Toronto and Galerie John A. Schweitzer in Montreal regularly exhibit sketches, drawings and models by well-known architects; there is a burgeoning publishing industry that produces nothing but hefty books and catalogues of significant architectural work; and architects themselves have been expanding their discipline to encompass more than just the creation of downtown towers and uptown houses. Michael Graves, Robert Venturi and Aldo Rossi, among many others, have turned their considerable three-dimensional talents to the design of plates, clocks, salt-and-pepper shakers and other domestic paraphernalia.

As contributing editor Adele Freedman tells us on page 68, Canadian architects have recently joined their international colleagues in this movement to bring architectural art to the masses. Thanks to Italian entrepreneur Cleto Munari and Francesca Valente, head of Toronto's Istituto Italiano di Cultura, designs by nine Canadians will join Munari's collection of other works in silver by architects such as Ettore Sottsass and Carlo Scarpa. The Canadians' work — drawings and prototypes — will be exhibited at the Istituto in the winter and at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Rome in the spring of 1990.

In fact, much of this summer issue could be said to have been built along an architectural axis. Geoffrey James has marked the opening of the Canadian Centre for Architecture with a photograph and short profile of founder Phyllis Lambert, herself an architect. And coincidentally, all of the featured artists have concerned themselves in some way with the visual and philosophical manifestations of architecture: the physical and metaphorical resonance of buildings constitutes one of the primary foundations of Gar Smith's work (Smith has also just been awarded a major commission for the Raymond Moriyama-designed Canadian embassy in Tokyo; see page 56); Derek Root (page 74) has recently been turning his painterly attention to architectural seats of power; and Renée Van Halm's installations (page 76) have always manifested a strong architectural component.

Perhaps the only artist in the main body of the issue who lacks a direct connection to architecture is performance artist Tanya Mars. But at the risk of stretching a point, her work grapples with the structures of relationships, of men to women and women to the world — producing an architecture, one might say, of the sexes.

JOCELYN LAURENCE
EDITOR

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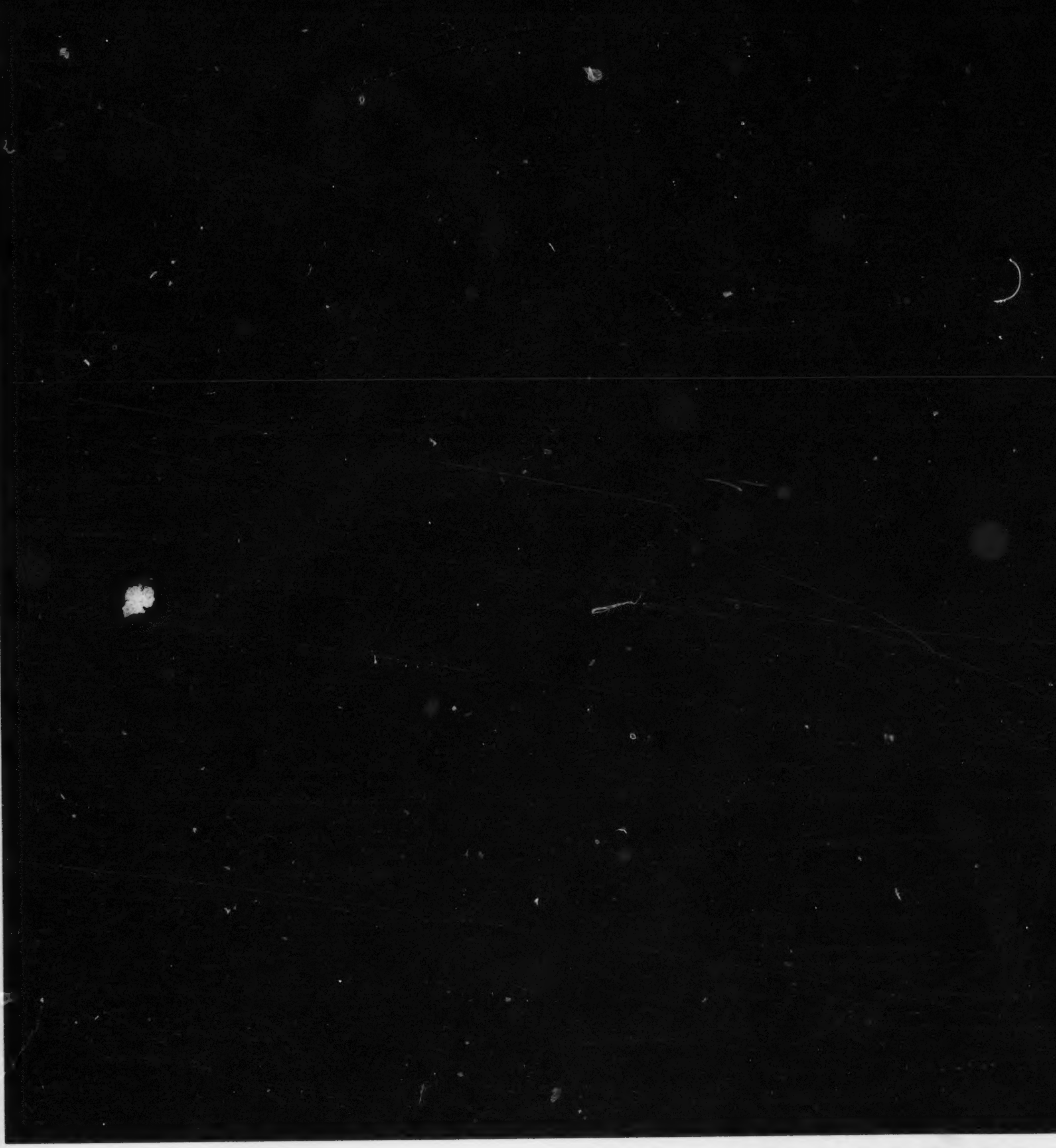

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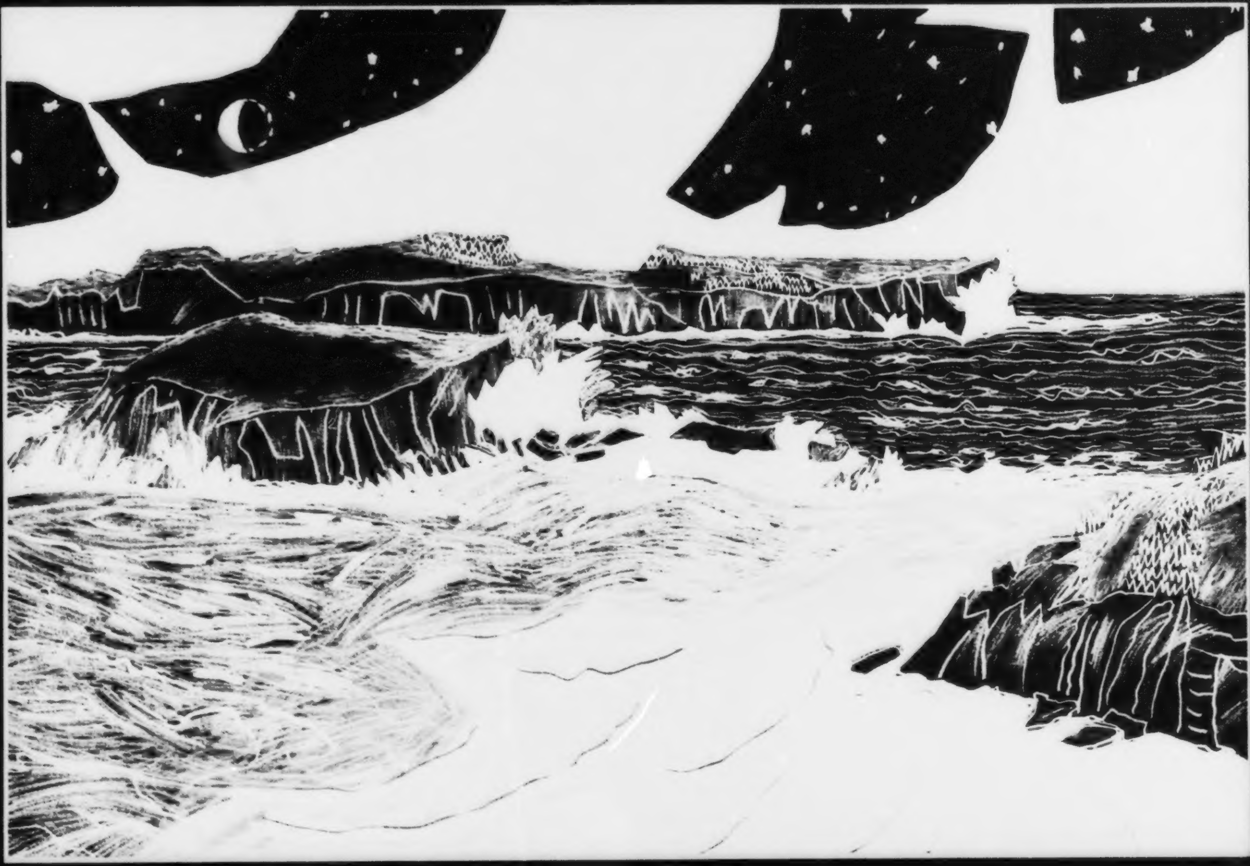

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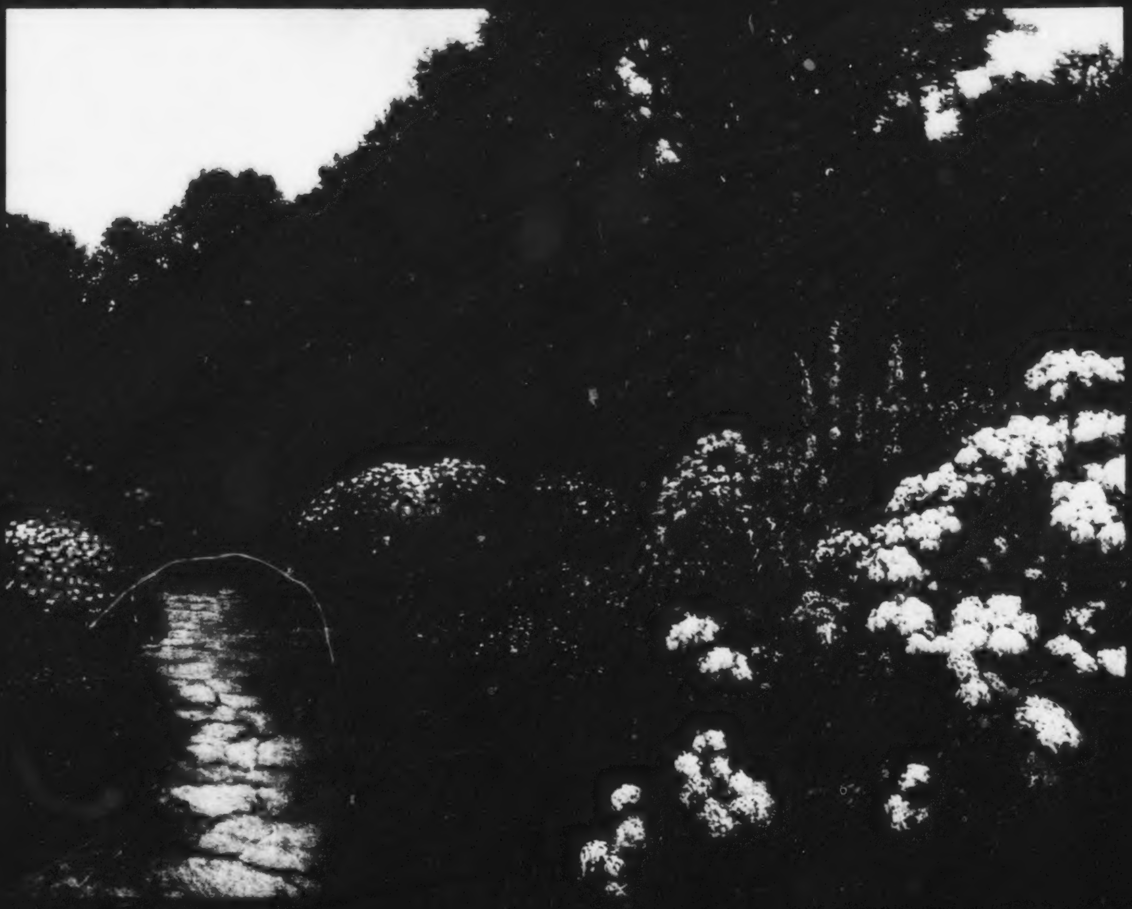

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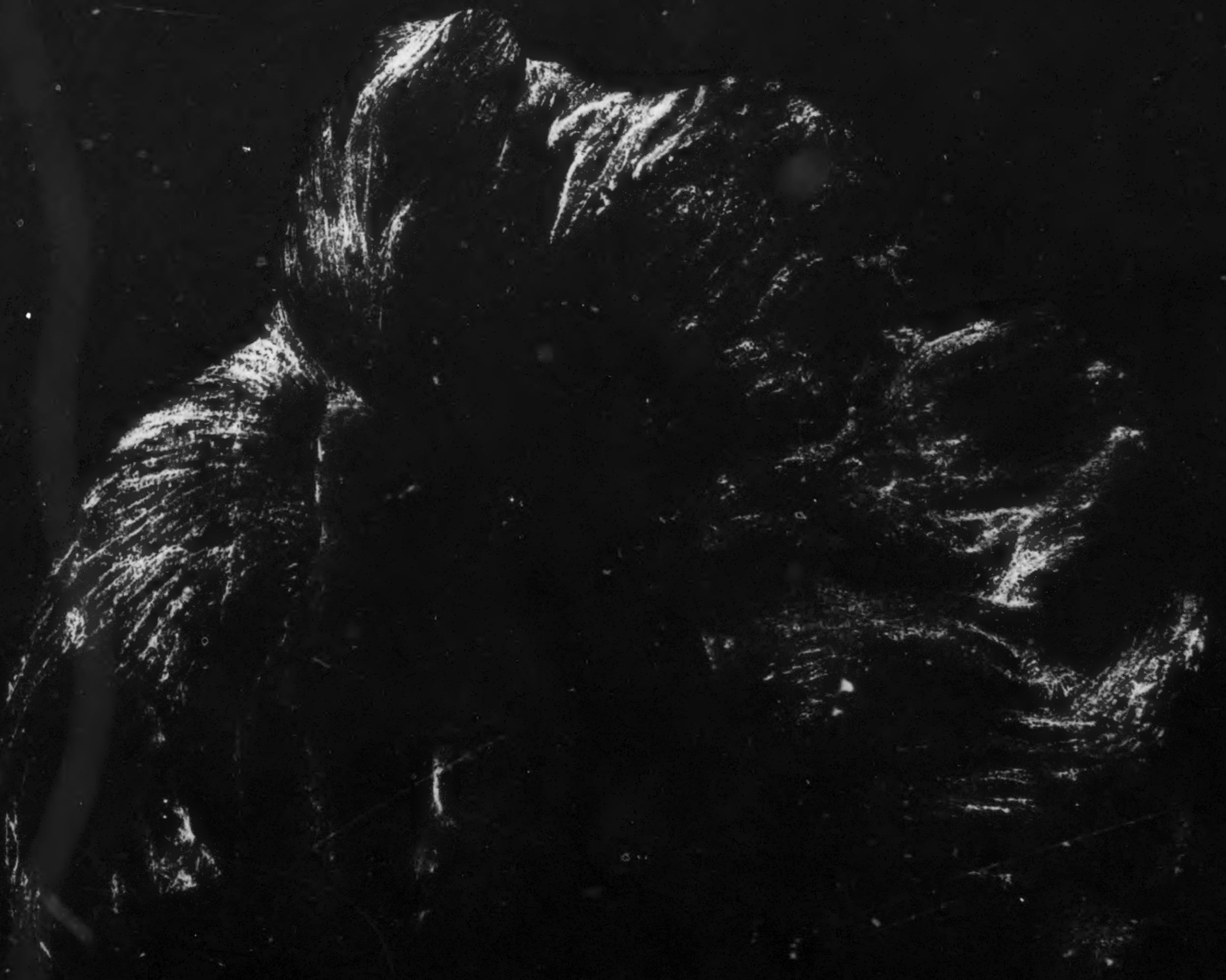

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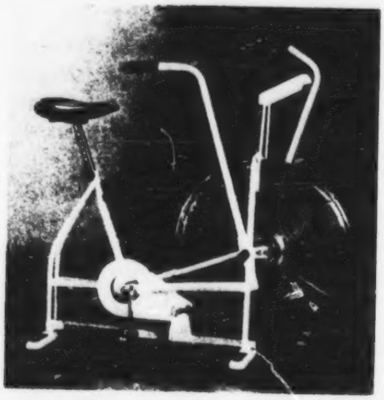
BY GARY MICHAEL DAULT

The Object

THE ZEITGEIST IN THE MACHINE: PERFECT IS THE BEST DISGUISE



Top: Schwinn Air-Dyne ergometer
Right: Schwinn medallion exercise bike

My thesis is simply that fitness machines these days are so formally compelling, so satisfyingly constructivist, that they generate a kind of mythic grandeur that is as much a part of their allure as the grail of fitness they house somewhere in their metaphysical depths.

It is increasingly difficult to think of these glittering, architectonic, mini-environments as mere tools. Machines like the Schwinn Air-Dyne exercise bicycle (a "total-body ergometer") and its more domesticated twin the Bio-Dyne (a "lower body ergometer") are such felicitous gatherings of levers, struts, flywheel, dials and gauges that they arouse a now almost buried hunger for the pure, perfectly mechanical thing. Both Dynes, Air and Bio, feature a separate and specific selling point of mechanism, something materially irresistible that functions the way a so-called hook in a pop song functions. In the case of the Air-Dyne it is the gleaming, stainless steel cage that houses the "unique fan wheel." With the Bio-Dyne, it is the parallelism of the bars and struts, the echoed canting backwards of the forks and the seat support and the milled severity of the "inertia wheel." Both machines, despite their advanced calibrators and LED displays, look as if they'd fit harmoniously, aesthetically speaking, into that Victorian hymn to gadgetry, Captain Nemo's submarine *Nautilus* in Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, an underwater epiphany of appropriation where, as Roland Barthes has pointed out in his essay on Verne in *Mythologies* (1972), "property is but a dialectical moment in the general enslavement of Nature."

Bruce Duffy, in his brilliant novel *The World As I Found It* (1987) about Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore and Ludwig Wittgenstein, has Wittgenstein walking home late one night after an agonized exchange with Russell and wondering "if a man might build around his life a machine by which he might become decent." Duffy's fictionalized Wittgenstein is, of course, positing the existence of some sort of dependable moral machine, something for the soul to count on. He may well have regarded the fitness machine as a little pedestrian for his purposes. And yet this is a more strictly material time than Wittgenstein's Cambridge of 1910; there is a good deal of quasi-mystical feeling floating about concerning gyms and fitness centres that speaks to the advanced pragmatics of the body's perfection as an agency of moral amelioration, as if the human body might turn out to be a sort of perambulating Bauhaus within which form and function melded inevitably into virtue.

Thus the mythopoeic nature of fitness machines. Like all mythopoeic settings for the transformable body, these machines are expected to enslave and enhance nature all at the same time. The unruly body, weak and therefore unable to address or control the imperatives of idealized form, is cudgelled and kneaded into place as if a pattern or template of its ultimately desired outline were forever being fitted onto it and checked for passages of persistent waywardness and extravagance. Schwinn's handsome Bow-Flex muscle-maker (which looks like the sort of hieratic, high-collar, sci-fi throne upon which might sit the evil emperor Ming of *Flash Gordon* infamy) promises "all the right moves and all the right results." What the Bow-Flex offers is "good form" (which used to be a goal of etiquette). Good form turns out to mean "balanced form" (fearful symmetry?). You get balanced form by working the middle, upper and lower body (that's all there is, isn't there?); you also get balanced form by putting on muscle and/or taking off pounds. Somewhere in between lies a golden mean, some Platonic self of selves. The offending nature that brought the imbalanced body to its deplorable pass is here enslaved by being imperiously warded away by its owner's Will to Form.

This same nature is enhanced by the machine's tireless collaboration in this program — what it is too easy to imagine to be the machine's own *parallel* Will to Form. Together, machine and man, machine and woman, person and anthropomorphized machine, come together as in some secret ceremony, some essentially sexual coupling of right moves and right resistance that leads to a consummation wherein the owner's hard-won perfection and the machine's formal splendor are finally aligned. All that is left is for the machine to admit that all this was good for it, too, and that it had never been like this before.

It would be unseemly, perhaps, to inquire too insistently what physical perfection is for, beyond the attainment of good health, I mean. Holland Cotter, writing in *Art in America* last year about sculptor Haim Steinbach and discussing Steinbach's "grace with metaphor" that is generated from his "system of setting objects into interactive communication," has occasion to mention the artist's *Spirit I* (1987), an emplacement of two steel weight-lifting machines juxtaposed to a shelf holding 36 lava lamps. Cotter understands the work as "an exercise in sheer sculptural stage presence — a joke on weight and heaviness" and "a concise essay on illusory power." He contrasts a reading of the lava lamps, which he sees as emblems of the "spacey passivity of psychological mood-changing," with the meaning of the weight-lifting machines (bearing the wonderfully mythic brand name of Universal Machines), agencies of a "repetitive, self-punishing machismo of pumping iron," which, Cotter remarks so tellingly, are used to acquire a physical strength "practically superfluous in our culture."

What good is a perfect body? The sea-change the body undergoes within fitness machines from unfit to fit is morphologically allied, after all, to the flight from the particular to the norm: the perfectly formed body is perfectly formed, an end-stopped, biomorphic tautology, bounded, unenterable (except by the machine), an echo of the nightmare dream of the mad scientist lurking in his archetypally underground laboratory (smoky with reverie), cackling like Dr. Frankenstein over the possibility of a race of beings who exhibit a delicious sameness, who, sewn in the soil of perfect alikeness, rise up from out of the ground like the fully armed soldiers, the dragon's teeth of the Cadmus myth, breathtaking in their uniformity, each body developed out to the limits of its idealized perimeter.

The perfect body, "balanced" into metaphysical perfection by its "good form," is no longer necessary as a lever of strength to perform the world's work. The perfect body is, rather, the site of a kind of narcissism that allies it to Oscar Wilde's understanding of art as being, in a way, "perfectly useless," a toy for its upwardly mobile owners. Fitness machines are not, after all, for the hoi polloi (Schwinn's Air-Dyne exercise bike sells for a thousand bucks). On the other hand, it could be argued that the striving for bodily perfection by machine is sort of like building the railroad to the west coast: these days, outer space being as much of a dream as it ever was, one's own physicality has become the Final Frontier. Body builders are pioneers of inner space, colonizers of the wildness that is the untamed and then under-curated human body.

But of course it's more than just narcissism, aestheticism, more than just idle solipsism that galvanizes all this constructive sweat and sets up fitness machines as if they were the chapels and confessionals of a new religion of externalized Calvinism whose holy writ is No Pain, No Gain. These machines are mythic to the extent that they are engines of metamorphosis. They are mounted, strapped on, entered, after which it is their business to change needful, unsatisfied, insufficient mortals into supermen and wonder women. The transformation is slow, of course, evolutionary. It does not take place in the apocalyptic puff of magic-time we are used to in our cartoons and comic books and films. But if any diligent, underdeveloped pilgrim to one of these weighside chapels of corporeal conversion were filmed in time-lapse photography, diligently sculpting his/her body from the inside out, you'd end up with the enactment of a migration of form to rival canons of transformation myth as established as Lon Chaney's growth into werewolfdom or Jane Wyatt's falling into time when she's hustled out of Shangri-La by Ronald Colman.

This is important, because it is only perfect bodies that are chosen for the big, mythic, transformative tasks of our culture. It takes a Julie Christie to awaken the mechanical lust of the insistently ardent robot in *The Demon Seed*, a Fay Wray (or Jessica Lange) to green the gargantuan heart of King Kong. And it is Sigourney Weaver, everybody's favorite postmodern heroine, who, as the remarkable believe-it-or-not Ripley in *Alien* and, more interestingly, in its artistically bad but semiologically compelling sequel *Aliens*, actually does battle (in the second film) with the inexplicably protean female monster called Mother by strapping to her own insufficient female frame a mighty, mechanical exoskeleton that looks like a fitness machine from Hell, without which our entire universe would now be — what? feminized?

It is surely outraging to feminists that Weaver manages this final armageddon only by purloining what is clearly a steerable, pugalistic manifestation (only slightly displaced) of male musculature, a sort of fighting gym on wheels that enables her to do battle woman to woman (or enhanced-woman to monstrous-woman). *Aliens* is basically a sort of intergalactic night of female mud wrestling. It is not the sexual politics of *Aliens* that concerns us here, however. What is interesting is that Ripley's fighting fitness machine, whatever its sex, is the means by which our world is again made safe. It is bodily perfection that does the trick. Bodily perfection brought about by the hottest Bow-Flex in the galaxy.

By John Scott

The Screen

WILD THINGS: A LOOK AT TEENAGE GANGS AND THEIR MEDIA RELATIONS

Still from *The Warriors* (Paramount, 1979)

Recently, a localized urban myth has appeared in Toronto that ranks in the frequency [illegible] retelling with the micro-[illegible] poodle and the girl with spiders in [illegible] goes something like this.

[illegible]y at Cineplex and all six [illegible] lobbies are filled with rowdy te[illegible] young male (often described as bla[illegible]) a[illegible]aches the cashier.

"What's [illegible]r most violent film?"

"*Rambo*, *Die Hard*, *No Mercy*, *The Terminator*, *Infant Death A-Go-Go*, but it doesn't start for an hour."

"Fine."

The young male then proceeds to a corner of the lobby where his breathing becomes heavy as he savors the approaching moments of cinematic violence.

Part of the ordering methodology inherent in the subtext of this urban myth is to transform the young man into a Gang Member. What's important about the story is not whether it is fact or a piece of popular fiction. What matters is that so many people from varied social positions and all over the political spectrum have incorporated this new, largely media-generated, hysterical trope into the lexicon of fear concerning youth, gangs, energy, race, difference. Toronto is currently obsessed with focusing on Gangness in a simple-minded way that ends up melding a number of complex issues and events into a single, recognizable image.

The media images of gangs are a problem both for those who see in them a violent, nihilistic, sexually unrepressed spectre and for the gang members themselves, who see in these distorted reflections at least an acknowledgement of their existence, a temporary, illusory break in their own state of powerlessness. Part of the problem is based in the cinematic appeal of gangs, with their use of visual codes — jackets, insignia, graffiti — as a means of defining and separating their members. These codes then become transmitted into signifiers of superficial power and identity within an imposed, tragic-romantic narrative that is usually resolved in violence.

Most youth-oriented films at this moment deal in some way with the contradictions of class distinctions, repressive, corrupt authority (as opposed to good, supportive authority) and the difficulty of upward mobility, which is often linked to rites of passage (for example, *Pretty in Pink*, *The Outsiders*, *Rumble Fish* and *Valley Girl*). Perhaps the appeal of gang-based movies lies in the characters' realization of their marginality. They already know they're not going to the prom. Beyond that, they realize not only that the North American dream is in fact a waking nightmare of brutal competition and meaningless consumption, but also that this glittering, irresistible hallucination is relatively unobtainable.

Adolescence/young adulthood tends to be a maelstrom of adopted cinematic plots and dramatic personae and postures, carefully selected and overlayed onto young lives as they interact with the hard surface of social reality and material conditions in order to fulfill specific needs, desires and fantasies. For those no longer youth-identified, the spectacle of large numbers of young people interacting with media events (say a rock concert) or overwhelming a public social space (a mall) can look like apocalyptic science fiction, and the kids like frenzied barbarians from another planet. Gangs, of course, do exist in Toronto, but hardly to the extent that necessitates the kinds of responses we are witnessing.

Encountering real violence, whether from the police, skinheads or from the equally wounding, slow violence of racism, materialism or grinding, oppressive architecture, is a horrific experience for the individual. Cinematic narratives that have been modified and enhanced as urban folklore, transformed into specific local behavior and then fed back into the electronic reporting media have certainly escalated rather than diffused the potential for violence. The models established by a film like *Colors*, for example, with its inherent racism and selective presentation of black youth, don't help matters. In it, our attitudes are already fixed, the images already polarized and extreme. The film's superficial realism constitutes a series of little truths that construct a big lie and engender no analysis.

The parallel social microcosm generated by gangs and their potential for visual weirdness has often been developed in science-fiction films and literature (*A Clockwork Orange*, *Panic in Year Zero*, *Mad Max*, *Escape From New York*, *Neuromancer*). Within these contexts, gangs are presented as anarchic brigands (as distinct from criminals), using their collective strength to survive and impose their will in a post-catastrophe world. Considering the degree to which the narratives of popular culture mirror the collective popular mind, perhaps the resurgence of gangs and our obsession with them reveal that in our collective unconscious, the apocalypse, which we have possibly secretly desired, has already occurred. Somewhere in the early to mid-'80s, between *The Fate of the Earth* and *The Day After*, nuclear horror was a tangible fear, generating images so potent that reality shifted without the events actually occurring. Maybe it was Black Monday and the ensuing economic collapse that didn't happen, held at bay by the collective refusal of the rich to be poor. Maybe we feel we should have collapsed, overloaded, under the sheer complexity of the world. But something did happen and we are definitely post something — but what?

On a March Tuesday in Toronto, real events took on a sinister approximation of science fiction as the Metro Toronto Police Force, with its newly formed anti-gang units, clashed with a number of youths who were selectively refused entrance to the Eaton Centre on the basis of being possible gang members. Considering that film is such a lucrative industry, sucking up dollars from even the most economically depressed sectors of society, and that it is also our most efficient mode of socialization, of conveying the law of cultural hegemony to a highly vulnerable target group, the youths' wish to get into the Eaton Centre's Cineplex in the first place is a little like prisoners rioting to get back into jail. The mobilization of police force seemed largely in response to "swarming," a new social phenomenon involving the surrounding of an individual by a group of youths who then strip him or her of valuables. I find it strange that the media have produced no meaningful discussion or analysis either of the youth/police encounter or of swarming itself, considering that so much of this despised behavior takes place in malls (those rat-warrens of consumerism), involves gaining access to media (the most efficient means by which an individual is guided toward predetermined values and lifestyles), and lastly invokes overgrown children snatching signifiers of affluence (a Roots jacket) off each other.

Children, adolescents, young adults, are neither idiots nor fools. Gang behavior seems disgusting and pathetic but hardly shocking, given the context of a society that condones mismanaged abundance, junk bonds and corporate raiding and pitiless exploitation, all rooted in a titanic and infantile greed, and in which violence and contradictions are inherent in the unjust distribution of material wealth and social worth. Can we really expect more in a world that so clearly emphasizes having, or rather the appearance of having, over being?

George Romero, one of the most brilliant cultural critics at work in cinema, constructed an eerily prophetic, dialectical metaphor for Toronto at the end of the '80s in his 1979 film *Dawn of the Dead*. In it, three groups struggle for dominance in a shopping mall located in a post-catastrophe near-future: zombie shoppers, virus-infected flesh-eating corpses returned from the grave to the mall, the site of their most meaningful experiences; a band of ex-policemen intent on enforcing archaic perimeters of meaning and order while accessing all the consumer goodies; and lastly, the real threat to established order, a group of highly mobile motorcycle brigands with no commitment to any specific locale and heavily into the immediate gratification of smash and grab. Romero's brilliance lies in his ability to make us identify with all three groups, as well as realize their monstrous nature, and in his refusal to provide a simple resolution. His main characters simply decide to abandon both their predetermined roles and their commitment to their environment in an attempt to find a more viable alternative.

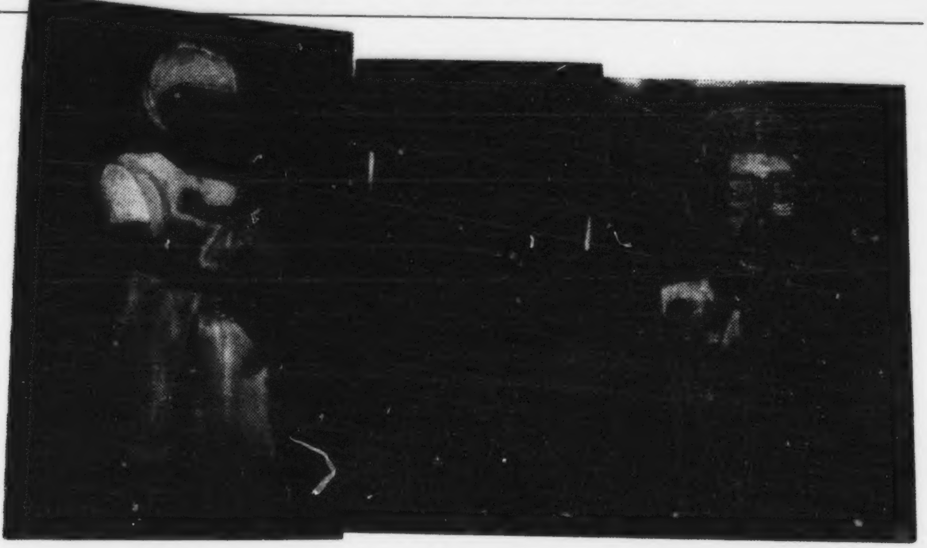
Finding or constructing that alternative — setting up ways of being in this world that work for the reality you actually occupy, rather than one of the exhausting plurality of hallucinations with which we are provided — is a difficult task. Gangs are a simplistic solution, a collective attempt to invest young lives with power and meaning. They will probably ebb and flow until replaced by a more relevant structural experience. After all, in the '60s, what teenager wanted to remain in the rigid structure of a gang while his/her peers were running off to San Francisco to lose themselves in pseudo-individuality while wrapped in the arms of Woodstock Nation?

The proliferation of images (media) within an immensely complex set of reflecting surfaces (the consumer-based, late-capitalist urban centre) seems only to reinforce, mystify and polarize. And what a waste to see potentially caring, nurturing adults transformed into paranoid embodiments of the law, rigidly defending the Palace of Having. Or to see adolescents who, with their almost demonic energy, are capable of swarming the barricades and storming the Bastille of History in order to radically transform reality through the power of Desire, fully committed to the spirit of law rather than its letter, reduced instead to spoiled children in a pseudo-military pact, snatching trinkets off the necks of the powerless.

The Female Gaze

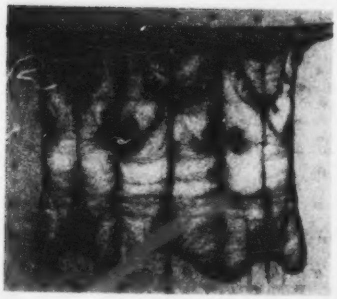
By Susan Crean

WOMEN'S BODIES, WOMEN'S SELVES: RECLAIMING AN ARTISTIC IDENTITY



Above: Buseje Bailey
The Black Box 1989
Mixed media
Approx. 72 x 48 in.

Below: Jane Martin
Three Emblems 1989
Oil on Masonite
27 ½ x 31 ½ in.
Photo: Jane Martin



The room is full of color, texture and flickering light. Candles, incense, cotton and ginger; beans, rice, peanuts and lime; batik and vegetable dyes made from indigo, onion skin and bougainvillea. Fabrications and images cover the walls, constructions fill the corners and spill out over the floor space. In the middle, a magnificent larger-than-life figure squats, arms outstretched as if in benediction. Ingeniously constructed of clay, wood slats and green sticks tied with string, she has a head represented by a gigantic knot of wood with startlingly realistic human features. The symbol and subject of the exhibition, she is Black Woman. And this is *Black Wimmin: When and Where We Enter*, a show presented in February at A Space in Toronto by artists/activists Buseje Bailey and Grace Channer, and organized by Diasporic African Women's Art (DAWA).

Curious, I note to myself, the first impression is not predominantly visual. It is aural and olfactory, appealing to touch, taste and ear. The place teems with rich surfaces and earth-natural materials, with things created by female hands, informed by women's skill and knowing: brightly patterned cloth dolls, woven pictures, hangings of monumental proportions worked in intricate detail. For example, Winsom's fabric scene of women working by the riverside, seen through a gossamer gauze curtain covered with appliquéd fishes. Redolent of Africa, the Caribbean, childhood and ancestors, *Black Wimmin* is a celebration of memory and of collective purpose. States DAWA: "Our economic and social reality has often served to keep us silent; however, this is also a condition which has added power and energy to our vision. DAWA hopes to provide Black

Women with a context in which to realize some of this energy. We feel it is time to interject ourselves into history...."

The exhibition brings together the work of 11 artists, whose diverse creations illustrate the aesthetic meeting of Africa and the West. And through their collective narrative we see black women, that doubly invisible "visible" minority of the Canadian art world. As the organizers insist, the show issues a challenge to Art Officialdom, which has a way of separating art from life and discussing it in hermetically sealed isolation, removed from community, spirituality and emotion. "We seek, like our African forebears, to celebrate the connectedness of all things."

Three box constructions, overlaid with magazine clippings, maps, fabric designs and family photos, are entitled *Mother of the Jews, Black Woman, Father of Africa*. For artist Kim McNeilly, these represent a visualization of childhood (her mother's home), the male world of book learning and geography (her father's domain) and herself, cultural offspring of a Jewish, Rumanian, African and Granadian mix. Her simple narrative, while grounded in autobiography, looks outward not inward, and draws a picture of a Third World that is neither barren nor hungry, but is instead a storehouse of civilization, vibrant with custom and tradition. Like the other *Black Wimmin* artists, she integrates the past with the present in her art, and is conscious of a certain moral responsibility toward both. "We don't have the luxury to make art for art's sake, to get caught up in trends or self-indulgence," she says. Not when the task at hand is to give voice and vision to the silenced two-thirds of the world's people and to invoke values not represented by those sitting in parliament or on arts council juries.

In the far corner of the room, Barbara Prezeau's *St. Soleil* is also about meetings across time and cultural space. Here she draws old religious signs in white flour on the floor in a cross formation: the protector of the woods, the god of agriculture, the cycles of life, the two snakes of androgyny and, at the centre, a heart with a knife in it. Christianity's sacred heart and voodoo's symbol of love and passion rolled into one. A ring of lighted candles marks the edges of the ritual enclosure, which is bounded by bright, rough-surfaced paintings on thick, handmade paper that hang on the adjacent walls. Just as the Haitian people combined Christian icons with their ancient beliefs, the better to revere and honor both, so Prezeau searches for a way to translate the aesthetic and collective unconscious of her black African/Haitian background. "My painting must be experienced as a raw and primal expression of an ecological sensibility, a credo which is at once contemporary and animistic."

In another corner, Dzian Lacharité's installation *Right Time, Right Place* is evocative of African reality in an entirely different way. A traditional dwelling made of bamboo, woodstring and leather sits on a bed of sand in which patterns and footprints have been drawn and symbolic objects placed. A piece of ginger lies in a wooden bowl at the curtained entrance. A warm orange light suffuses the set, drawing out the scent of the materials, recreating the feel of a hot, dry climate. Quiet in the mid-afternoon; time suspended; life and death contemplated.

Along the side wall is Buseje Bailey's *The Black Box*,an assemblage that opens, medieval triptych-like (but with black rather than gold background), to reveal paintings of a woman holding a child on the two inside flaps. In the central box-shaped panel sit a shackled foot and a shoe, with two candles affixed to the inside rims and an inscription that begins "I'm painting heaven in Black / Black Woman in focus / nursing hearts unknown"; on the back, the painted image of another woman holding another child. Bailey's stark prose-poetry, the intensity of her imagery and the sweet strength of her voice are compelling. No attempt is made to soften the bitter edges of history or to sidestep the brutality of survival. This is a modern icon that speaks of womanpower and the truth of black people's lives. It is an uncompromising vision that hides nothing and shines its light in the face of Fine Art.

Identity. For the last decade or so, women artists have been engaged in the vast and difficult project of reclaiming our physical presence in art, repossessing the meaning of our bodies and the image of ourselves so long defined by racist male sexuality. Of course, it remains to be seen whether we can ever fully detoxify the image of naked woman so she can be seen without the interference of old codes and outworn conventions. At the forefront of this exploration into equality alongside the Black Wimmin artists is painter Jane Martin, whose recent work was exhibited in April at Ottawa's Gallery 101. Loosed from literal definition, Martin's human bodies have become sites for an astonishing display of emotion and psychic meaning. For many years she painted figures — male and female, mostly nude — whose features were oddly misshapen, malformed or missing altogether. Truncated limbs bound with mauve satin ribbons, wizened genitals depicted in loving detail were presented with front-parlor formality, against exquisite lace and flower backgrounds. This combination of the sweet and the grotesque shoves socially bound notions of beauty and the physically "normal" to the edge, while it confronts the ingrained prejudice that causes most of us to recoil, at first, in horror.

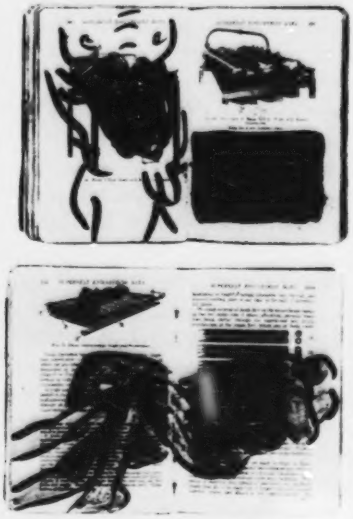
After 1986, and a series of colored pencil drawings called *Transfigurations*, Martin moved away from anatomically correct and complete bodies and began using excerpts, mainly torsos, suspended on silken ropes. These she then decorated, folding, tucking and manipulating the warm meaty substance into strange arabesques. One moment the flesh imitates cloth and thereby fashion. The next it recalls the ceremonial painted body of aboriginal peoples. The body tranformed becomes icon and totem object, pregnant with mysterious significance and remembered experience. Blunt inscriptions of herstory: surgical tracings left by hysterectomy and caesarian section, the ritual patterns of female reproduction. With this iconography Martin reaches for a new female/feminine ethos that sees with the body and becomes a metaphor for power and life, every bit as candid and courageous as Grace Channer's untitled figure that was the centrepiece of the *Black Wimmin* exhibition.

In the work of these women we can sense an extraordinary will to empower the vision of women, to describe the physicality of the female principle in life and politics as well as art, and to open the heart to the wisdom that spirit posesses.

By Dot Tuer

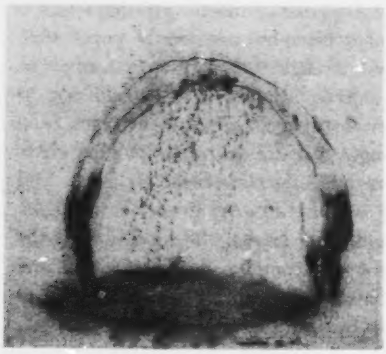
The Revolver

THE EMBATTLED BODY: AIDS AND THE CURRENT CRISIS OF REPRESENTATION



Above: Andy Fabo
Superheater 1988
Pages 153-153A and 180-181
Multimedia bookwork
Courtesy Paul Chapnick

Below: Stephen Andrews
rainfalling 1988
Oil stick, graphite on parchment
17 x 14 in.



In the theoretical writings that currently shadow the visual arts, a hybrid and highly charged polemic surrounding the body and representation has emerged in the late 1980s. The phenomenon of the body has been dissected with arguments drawn from such diverse sources as feminism's critique of patriarchy, the scientific aspirations of psychoanalysis and the philosophical project of deconstruction, finally to be reread as a mediated object that splinters under scrutiny into a thousand competing discourses. The body, it is argued, packaged by media, divided by gender and contained by a public/private split, has simply disappeared.

The inflammatory conclusion of this postmodern condition, in which the body can only ever be a site of theoretical tropes or a subject of appropriation, may seem ridiculously abstract to most people. It is particularly so to artists who insist upon a location for the body that expresses the lived experiences of sexual, racial or cultural differences silenced in a North American context. But despite the efforts of artists to challenge the notion of the body that is both constructed and contained by the status quo, the predominance of postmodernism has affected the attitudes and projects of contemporary art practice. Artists who seek to articulate an oppositional social and political experience are dismissed as naïve and materially simplistic, while theorists of the new age announce not only the end of the body, the end of history and the absence of politics, but the end of art.

The naming of AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) as a counterpoint to the cynical and bewildering complex of discourses that describe and contain the body would seem at first to disarm the polemic of a postmodernism that denies the body the validity of experience. When people are living with and dying of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), abstractions of the body's disappearance become particularly repellant, even obscene. But in identifying AIDS as a site of the body's disintegration, and perhaps one of the underlying causes of art criticism's current anxieties, one does not dismantle a crisis in representation. Rather, AIDS, as a medical syndrome seemingly without an origin and wrapped in media glitz, doubles the stakes in the postmodernist claim to a body that cannot exist outside the metaphors and narratives that frame it.

AIDS as a subject of clinical research is still clouded by controversy and a constantly evolving vocabulary. What is known is that regardless of sexual orientation, it is the education on and incidence of safe sex and safe drug practices that contain the virus. AIDS as a media disease, however, has become a label of highly inflammatory dimensions. It has become synonymous with promiscuity, with homosexuality, with a modern-day plague. It blurs the distinction between public and private spheres, bringing sexuality out of the closet and into the glaring lights of media fascination. As a locus where technology and morality meet, and where sexuality and death conflate, AIDS is both a linguistic and material crisis of our society.

Within the sphere of the visual arts,

the body's sexuality and morality have traditionally been the subject of both figurative and abstract expression. In the face of the AIDS crisis, however, assumptions concerning the intentionality and interpretation of these subjects have dramatically altered. Images of bodies and death are vulnerable to a number of preconceptions and misconceptions brought about by the AIDS crisis. Representations of sexuality and transgression have become subject to an AIDS-era revisionism, which can read these images as both dangerous and prophetic. But nowhere is the contradiction between the body and its image greater than in the work of artists who have sought an expression of the homosexual body within art and who must now deal with the image of gay sex and AIDS perpetrated by the mass media.

Homosexual images of the body have been a subtext throughout the history of art, but until the appearance of AIDS, the exploration of the homosexual body occurred at the margins of the mainstream art world. These images were then coded and recirculated, masked by the prevailing assumption of heterosexuality. In the age of AIDS, however, the homosexual body is no longer an absent body but a front-page headline. "GAY PLAGUE" screamed the tabloids in the early 1980s, while explicit and objectifying photographs of AIDS "victims" portrayed the choice of this particular sexual orientation as a disease-riddled death sentence. In this context, postmodernism's rhetorical conclusion that the body has disappeared takes on a chilling resonance.

Artists who seek to locate the homosexual body in the context of the AIDS crisis are caught, paradoxically, between the need to combat the hysteria of the mass media and the need to represent personal experiences of fear and death. The *Names Project Quilt*, which originated in San Francisco, is perhaps the most widely publicized artistic response to the representational crisis of AIDS. An ever-expanding quilt pieced together from squares commemorating individuals who have died from AIDS, the *Names Project* is both a collective memorial and an activist insistence that death be remembered with dignity rather than brutalized and depersonalized by media headlines.

In contrast to the *Names Project*, which draws upon a feminist strategy of recording memories and reclaiming artistically disowned forms, the recently formed Act Up (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) coalition of New York City uses civil disobedience, posters, video and installation strategies. Speaking out against a system that has equated sex with death, Act Up uses the slogan "SILENCE = DEATH" to actively condemn both mass media disinformation and government inaction. These artists and community activists insist that the pessimism of postmodernism be replaced by a radical explosion of self-determined representation.

In Canada, artists have chosen to work both collaboratively and individually to create responses to the AIDS issue that are personal and creative as well as political. The Canadian videos that were featured as part of *Angry Initiatives, Defiant Strategies*, a week-long series of screenings held at A Space in October 1988 and organized by Michael Balser, Tim McCaskell, Richard Fung, David McIntosh, Gary Kinsman and John Greyson, were humorous and metaphorical in their approaches to the AIDS issue. Greyson's *Ads Epidemic*, first screened as one of a series of video installations in a Toronto shopping mall, utilizes the Thomas Mann novella *Death in Venice* to contrast the plague paranoia generated by the media (embodied by a caricature of Aschenbach) with the pleasure Tadzio and his friend enjoy while practicing safe sex. Michael Balser and Andy Fabo's *Survival of the Delirious* overlays contemporary scenes of a young man testing HIV positive with reenactments from a Cree and Ojibway myth. In a larger context, the themes and strategies used in these videos belong to a growing concern on the part of Toronto visual artists to create images that address not only the public ramifications of the AIDS crisis but also the dissolution of meaning and the paradoxes of sexuality and death embodied by the issue.

In particular, the poignant and often fragile images of Andy Fabo and Stephen Andrews stand out as individual responses that reclaim both the body and art as territories of reflection. Stephen Andrews' *rainfalling* (1988), for example, in which an elongated male figure is separated at the waist and joined by an arc, strikes a subtle balance between the experiences of the body's mortality and its living possibilities.

In Andy Fabo's recent show *Technologies of the Self* at the Garnet Press Gallery in Toronto, his bookworks and large-scale mixed-media drawings insist upon a space within visual representation to explore the complexity of responses the AIDS virus has generated in both the private and public spheres. He seeks to eroticize images of safe sex, which, combined with references to botany, conductors, all-seeing eyes and satellite dishes, create a stunning visual narrative that juxtaposes nature and science, sexual desire and media oppression. In Fabo's work the body does not disappear but becomes a conduit for the discourses that penetrate and surround it. The body is electrified and alive, treading gingerly between a memorial of the past and a vision of the future.

Fabo's and Andrews' works are neither confrontational nor populist in tone. In contrast to the call for an activist strategy, exemplified by the American critic Douglas Crimp in his anthology *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism*, these Toronto artists have chosen to locate their practice and theory at the crossroads of critical, political and aesthetic concerns. In a talk entitled "Imagining the Body (during the AIDS epidemic)" given at a conference on "Representing AIDS: Crisis and Criticism" in November 1988, Andy Fabo emphasized the need not only to privilege the public sphere but to understand that "community is created when we articulate our private hopes, fears, joys and sorrows." Citing the diverse artistic responses to the AIDS crisis in the work of Regan Morris, Stephen Andrews and Shelagh Keeley, Fabo not only located a community of artists combatting the panic of the mass media but asserted the importance of a struggle to "represent ourselves as subjects." Rather than succumbing to the death knells of postmodernism, Fabo suggests a strategy where political realities and subjective vision can meet. And it is in this strategy, in the work of Fabo and other artists who have chosen the body as a complex site of exploration and contradiction, that I believe the end of art has found a new beginning.

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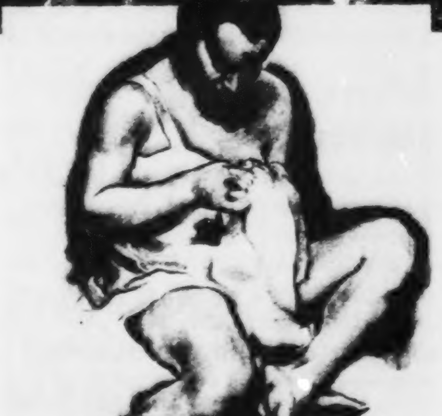

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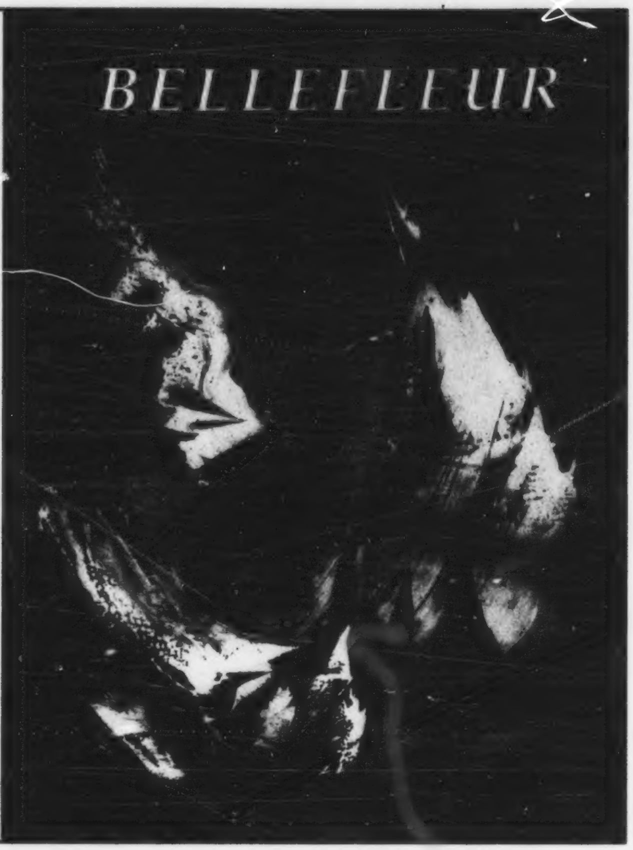

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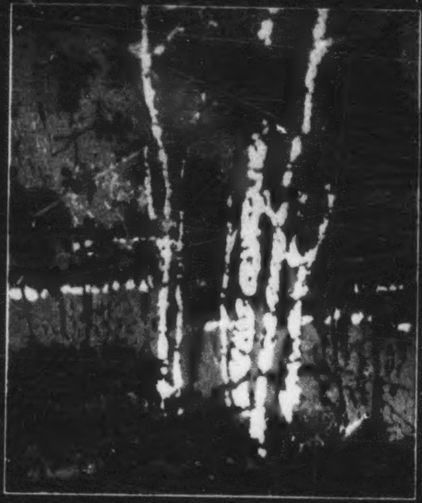

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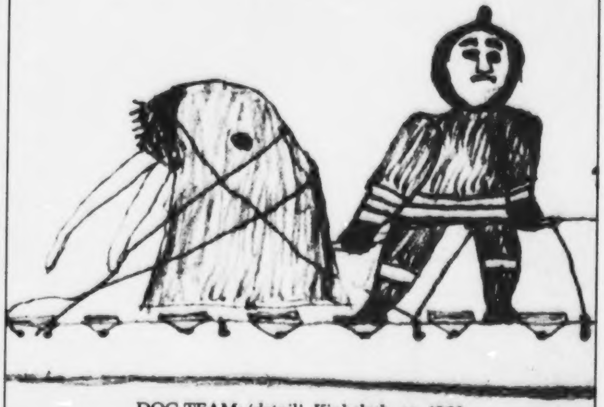

DOG TEAM: *(detail), Kiakshuk, ca. 1960*

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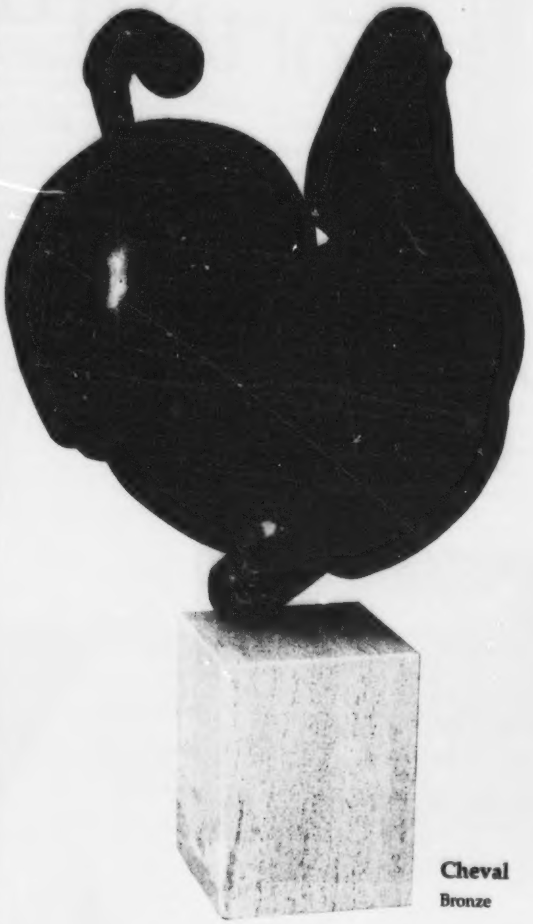

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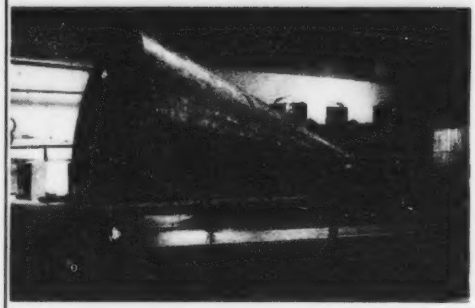
Fast Forward

A cross-Canada checkup of people and events in the arts

Compiled by SARAH MILROY

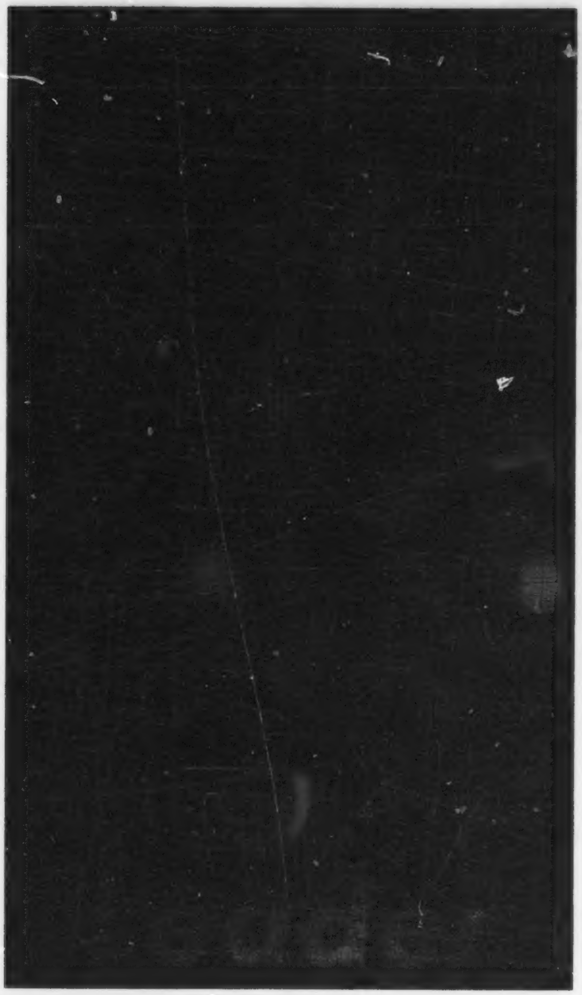
Toronto sculptor Bernie Miller has long been interested in the complex issues surrounding the process of vision. Toward that end, his upcoming exhibition at the Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, from June 10 to July 1, addresses the relationship between modernity and utopian vision. As in his earlier work, Miller draws on a vocabulary of images and materials that refer to Russian Constructivism, information-age technology and the language of utopia. This installation speaks of the effects of television and its ability to enforce a vision of the world. Miller's circular arrangement of a series of eight steel facsimile TV monitors recalls Jeremy Bentham's model of the panopticon, a frightening reminder of the relationship between vision and power. In contrast, a striding central figure takes the shape of an anthropomorphic satellite, a reminder of our utopian vision of the information age. Within these contradictory readings, Miller invites us to consider the language of utopia and the role of vision in that discourse. *Bruce Grenville*



Above: *Radio Theory* (detail) 1985
Sheet metal
60 x 103 x 18 in.
Photo: Peter McCallum

Right: *Multi-Vox* (detail) 1987
Steel, TV antenna towers
72 x 108 x 60 in.
Photo: Cheryl O'Brien

Left: Component of *Learn to Throw Your Voice* 1986
Stainless steel
60 x 108 x 60 in.
Photo: Cheryl O'Brien



"DON'T TALK DOWN TO ME. DON'T BE POLITE TO ME. DON'T TRY TO MAKE ME FEEL NICE. DON'T RELAX. I'LL CUT THE SMILE OFF YOUR FACE." Jenny Holzer's art is tough in any context, but it's hardly what one would expect above the ferns in the secretarial pool. In fact, this work — and several others by Holzer — belongs to First Bank System, a Minneapolis-based bank holding company with some unusual ideas about corporate art. This summer, at least 70 pieces of their more than 3,000 works of art are on show in the Winnipeg Art Gallery's *Challenge in the Workplace: The First Bank Collection* (June 8 to August 20), organized by gallery director Carol Phillips and adjunct curator Bruce Ferguson.

The collection is a virtual compendium of the '80s art world, including everyone from Holzer and Kruger to Kiefer, Richter and Schnabel. But it's not just this Who's Hot list that makes the First Bank collection exceptional. While most corporate collecting still seems intent on decoration, First Bank curator and visual arts director Lynne Sowder and her colleagues in the visual arts division have orchestrated programming that examines and challenges the nature of corporate culture — its sexism, its breaches of communication, its restrictive hierarchies. Secretaries and V-Ps alike participate (on equal terms) in acquisitions as well as in a "Talkback" program through which employees express their enthusiasm and complaints about the art in their workplace. They can even banish a work from their area, if their complaints are shared by six or more colleagues, and pick a replacement. These outcasts are then exhibited in the Controversy Corridor before being recycled (at six or more employees' request) into another area.

Sowder, who got involved with the Bank's collection in 1980, also oversees the bank's commissioning of special artist projects. Canadian video artist Norman Cohn, for example, known for his *Quartet for Deafblind* (1986), has just completed *Bank*, a compilation of dozens of video-portraits of First Bank employees that he created collaboratively over an 18-month period.

This collection raises some interesting questions. Does culture on the walls affect the culture in the office? For example, though the bank owns and exhibits many explicitly feminist works, according to one employee at last count only three of the company's top executives were women. But by empowering employees of all ranks to come to terms with their own sensibilities, and to make decisions about their work environment, Sowder has offered First Bank a provocative democratic model. *Sarah Milroy*

Left: Barbara Kruger
Untitled 1987
Photograph
48 x 84 in.
Collection: First Bank System

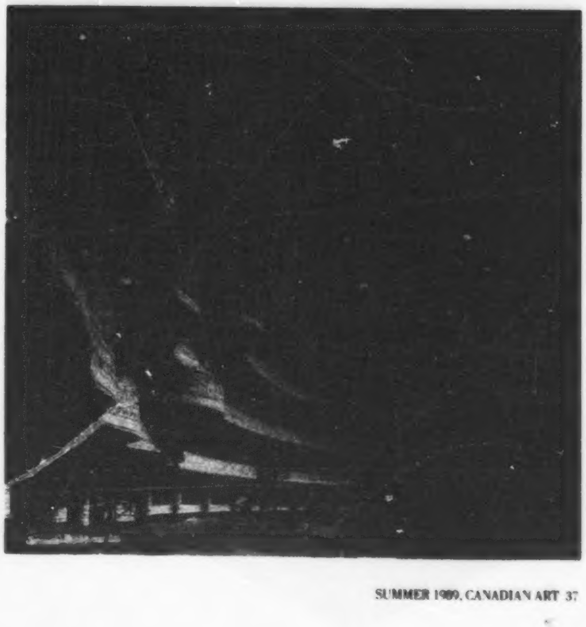
Right: Bruce Nauman
Two Men Slap in their Faces 1985
Neon, glass tubing
49 x 31 in.
Collection: First Bank System

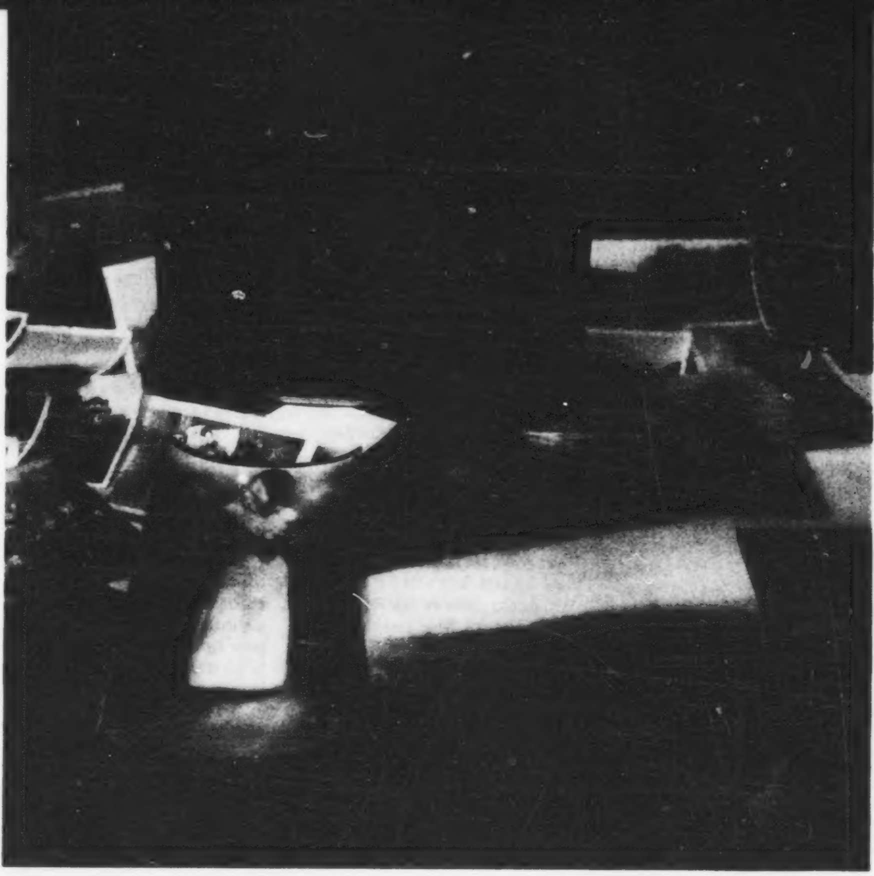
Architect Douglas Cardinal's controversial Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec, opens to the public on June 29. With a budget that has ballooned from $85 million to over $250 million, the museum has grown to a mammoth state-of-the-art emporium. Its two-building structure contains a million square feet of space, including storage and conservation facilities, 180,000 square feet of exhibition area and the world's first convertible IMAX/OMNIMAX film theatre.

The architectural centrepiece of the museum is the Grand Hall, a huge area nearly 400 feet long and over 50 feet high, housing a simulated rain forest and native-built examples of Pacific Coast Indian village façades. The museum's world-famous collection of totem poles are set up along the shore of this mock village, part of the museum's you-are-there approach.

In the upper reaches of the museum is the History Hall, filled with full-scale, period reconstructions (including the interior of a whaling ship and a fur trading post) that cover a thousand years of Canadian history. There are plenty of artifacts to fill the space, but it will be three years before installations are complete. Serious museum scholars are less worried about this than they are about director George MacDonald's theme-park approach. West Coast native artist Bill Reid speaks for many when he points out that the museum's collection — particularly in Northwest Coast Indian art — contains six or seven of the world's finest pieces. "They should be given a place of honor," says Reid, not lost amid a sea of simulation. "What bothers me," he continues, "is that young people won't be able to discover them as they should. All they will see is Madison Avenue gimmickry." MacDonald, however, is faced with an urgent need to attract visitors to the new museum. He believes that what has been described as a Disneyland approach is the way to go about it. *Sarah Jennings*

Right: Canadian Museum
of Civilization
Architect: Douglas Cardinal

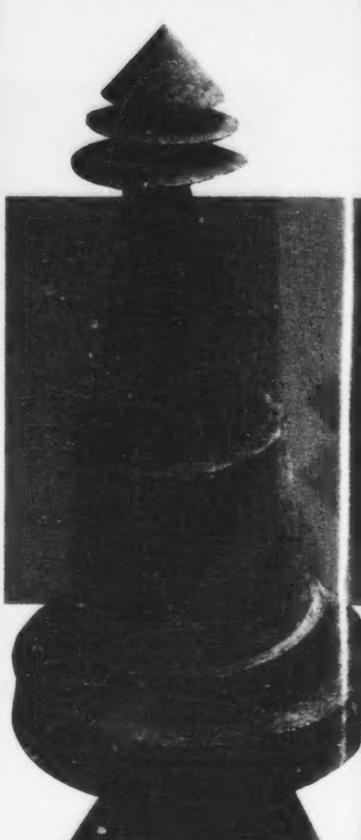




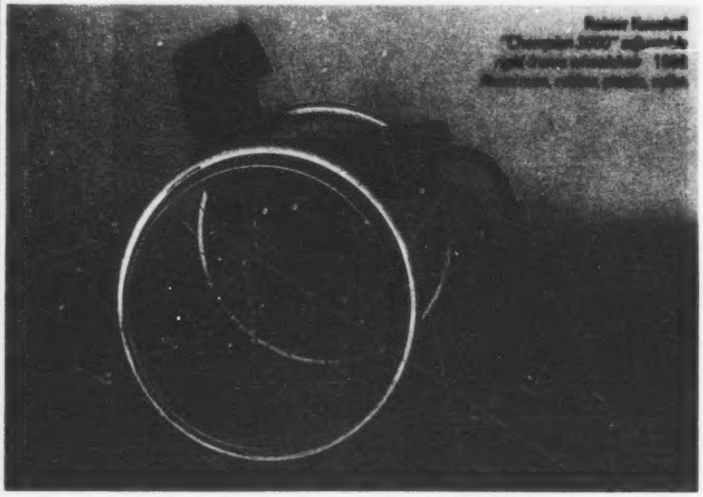
Wyn Geleynse
Some take photographs to forget,
I close my eyes to remember
(detail of work in progress) 1989
Courtesy of the artist

For more than 10 years, London, Ontario, artist Wyn Geleynse has created poignancy out of apparent whimsy. His projections of feathery homemade movies and still photographs onto ground glass and empty picture frames rekindle their emotive qualities and plumb the deep well of associated memory. To date, his best imagery has been the most personal, utilizing family snapshots and scenarios linked to a world of domesticity. Geleynse's work is imbued with anxiety, borne out in the endless film loops that repeat images over and over again. In themselves, the films' repeated loops place before us a search for meaning in both memory and compulsive behavior.

Until June 25, four of his works from the past three years are showing at the Art Gallery of Windsor, including Geleynse's first pieces using color film. In the works at Windsor, Geleynse explores the ambiguous relationship between photographs and the memories they so popularly represent, questioning the role photographs play in the recording of personal histories. One installation created for the Windsor show, titled *Some take photographs to forget, I close my eyes to remember* (1989), incorporates found photography, projected film footage of the interior of Notre Dame cathedral (which he visited last summer) and several wall-mounted stills drawn from the film. Like many of his other works, *Some take photographs to forget* ... questions the ways in which photography can be said to stand in for experience.
Matthew Teitelbaum



Abraham David Christian
1986 1986
Paper, plaster, paint
12 in. diameter x 20 in.



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"Champion 3000" [illegible]
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In this dark and ambiguous age, straight-shooting modern design has found itself a few sturdy citadels, among them, the empire of Braun appliances and its tribe of imitators; Scandinavian hand tools; American sports equipment; and prosthetic equipment for the handicapped. Currently the argument that there is a strong correlation between form and purpose seems best sustained only at moments of functional extremity. Ski boots and artificial legs, for example, present a similar design challenge, albeit in different contexts.

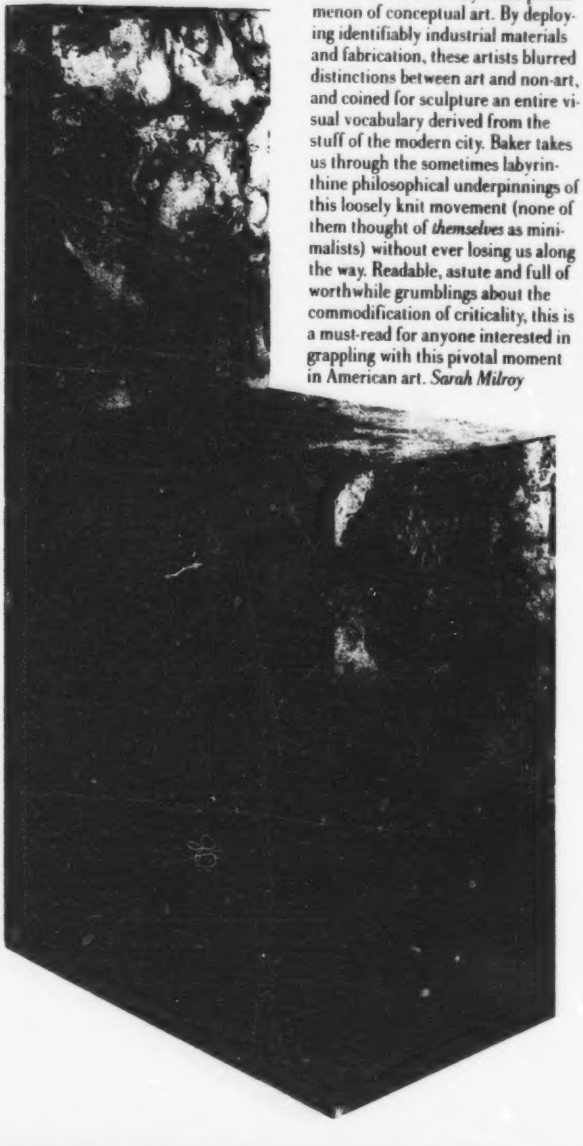
In The Museum of Modern Art exhibition *Designs for Independent Living* (at Toronto's Power Plant June 30 to September 3) curator Cara McCarty has selected from among professionally designed "mass-produced objects currently available for the elderly and those with physical disabilities" to mount a show of products that are lean, economic, purist and unobtrusive. The functionalist heritage of these designs is clear. Each catalogue photograph presents its subject in pristine and featureless isolation; the images could have been lifted unaltered from the illustrated pages of Herbert Read's fundamental essay of 1934, "Art and Industry." At a time when design has been reexamined in light of the once latent but now entirely obvious values of culture, fashion and commodity, this naïve reassertion of the pioneering values of industrial design is the artistic message of this worthwhile show: good old modern design is still a force to be reckoned with, even if it no longer dominates the field.
Donald McKay

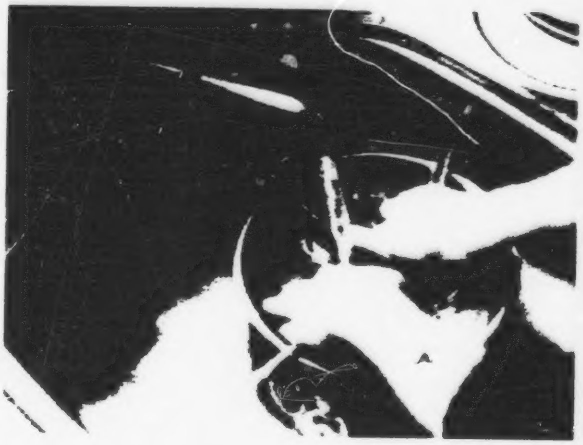
Group shows are the stages on which curators play out their intellectual and creative concerns, joining compelling objects to equally compelling theories to create visual manifestations of what takes place first and foremost in language — on paper and in the mind of the curator. Toronto's Bruce Grenville (recently appointed curator of the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon) has orchestrated a prolific number of such marriages for both public galleries and artist-run centres, frequently re-contextualizing existing art works in such a way that demands re-examination of the work. His most recent exhibition, *The Anti-Graceful* (at the S.L. Simpson Gallery in Toronto, May 12 to June 14), includes selections from the work of Abraham David Christian, Tom Dean, Janice Gurney, Carol Laing and Mary Scott, artists whom Grenville describes as producing work that "in some way threatens the diplomatic relationship between art and the social order." These are artists whose ideas and work about the body, identity, form, and knowledge breach notions of metaphorical, metaphysical or mere physical states of grace.
Elke Town

Left: 17th-century tea kettle
from *The Tokugawa Collection: The Japan of the Shoguns*
Musée des beaux-arts
de Montréal
June 21 to September 10

Kenneth Baker's *Minimalism*, published this season by Abbeville Press, rides the crest of resurgent art-world interest in figures such as Nauman, Artschwager, Judd, Flavin, Andre and Lewitt. Bereft of expressive gesture and decorative detailing, the objects declared the principal locus of artistic activity as the head, not the hand — a premise minimalism shared with the closely allied phenomenon of conceptual art. By deploying identifiably industrial materials and fabrication, these artists blurred distinctions between art and non-art, and coined for sculpture an entire visual vocabulary derived from the stuff of the modern city. Baker takes us through the sometimes labyrinthine philosophical underpinnings of this loosely knit movement (none of them thought of *themselves* as minimalists) without ever losing us along the way. Readable, astute and full of worthwhile grumblings about the commodification of criticality, this is a must-read for anyone interested in grappling with this pivotal moment in American art. *Sarah Milroy*

Below: Richard Artschwager
Chair 1966
Formica
59 x 18 x 30 in.
Collection: Saatchi

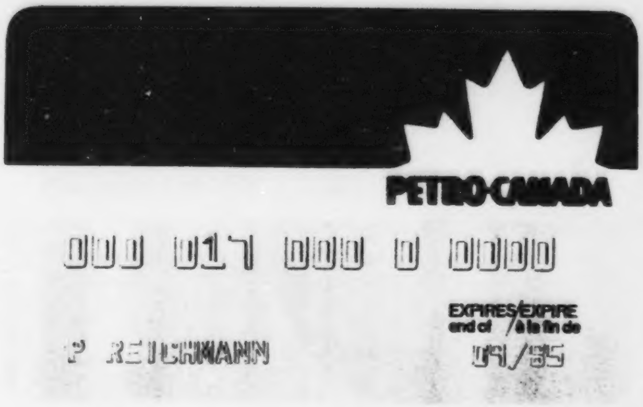




Above: Jennifer Babcock and Tamithy Basarba
Still from *A Woman's Work is Always Done* 1988
Video
2 mins., 5 sec.

Feminist criticism and practice in the visual arts are the focus of programs at the Simon Fraser Centre for the Arts Summer Institute 1989 and the Vancouver Art Gallery in June. Simon Fraser offers a three-week intensive seminar led by British-based artist Mary Kelly (June 12 to 30). Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1974-79) is widely recognized as a key work in the feminist challenge to patriarchal and sexist ideologies. The work documents the early years spent with her son as they faced impinging cultural expectations concerning gender roles. Kelly's explicit feminism is part of a broad movement that uses the insights of Marxism, semiotics and psychoanalysis to revise our understanding of art's potential to effect social change. Vancouver-born critic Jo-Anna Isaak joins Kelly for the second week of the workshop and British artist Victor Burgin participates in the third week. The Kelly workshop, laconically titled *The Critical Practice of Art*, will be the first visual arts course the Summer Institute has offered. It is an auspicious beginning.

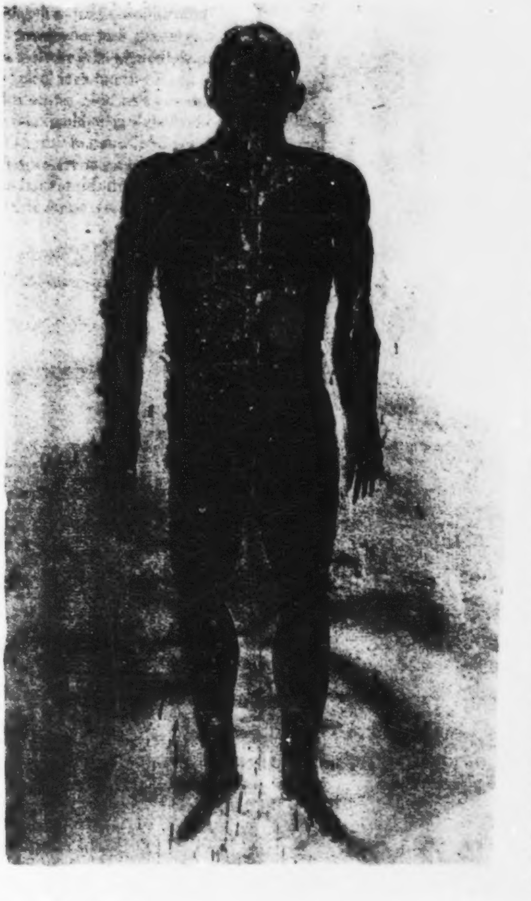
Concurrently the VAG offers public lectures by Kelly, Burgin, Isaak and British feminist Griselda Pollock, who also conducts a week-long seminar titled *Different Perspectives: Perspectives on Difference*. Pollock is the author of several books containing important arguments in the current debate about art history and women in culture, the most recent being *Vision and Difference* (1988). In addition the VAG will screen the National Gallery of Canada's 15-year retrospective of feminist video, unfortunately titled *Rebel Girls*, to coincide with the other activities. *Scott Watson*



Henry Tsang
enGULFed 1987
Silkscreen on Plexiglas
40 x 26 in.

Until June 24, Vancouver's artist-run Or Gallery is showing an exhibition at the Cold City Gallery in Toronto, another artist-run collective. Since it was founded in 1983 by artist Laiwan, the Or has served as a focal point for an emerging generation of Vancouver artists. The gallery began in response to the dearth of exhibition space for noncommercial, critically engaged art, and a community of artists and writers has come to depend on the exposure it offers. Originally an ad hoc, one-person operation, the Or has gone through the inevitable process of institutionalization in order to qualify for funding, but their unusual policy of one-year artist curatorships continues. This summer, photo-artist and writer Nancy Shaw takes over from installation artist Phillip McCrum (past curators include Ken Lum and Arni Runar Haraldsson). The Or also continues to program international and Canadian artists (Barbara Kruger, Thomas Lawson, Daniel Buren, Robert Wiens, Joanne Tod, to name a few) alongside Vancouver artists.

The work on show in Toronto is, with one exception, by board members and represents the wide variety of activity in Vancouver's critical underground. The works range from feminist reappraisals of painting (Mina Totino, Corrinne Carlson and Erin O'Brien) to works that appropriate the sign systems of advertising and entertainment to suggest alternate constructions of identity (Henry Tsang, Reid Shier) and works that examine the relationship between technological processes that produce cultural images and their foundation in ideology (Stan Douglas, Michelle Normoyle, Wendy Dobreiner and Phillip McCrum).
Scott Watson

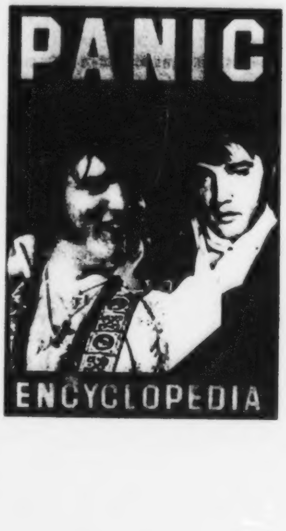


Kiki Smith
Muscle Men 1988
Ink on paper
47 ½ x 83 in.

Kiki Smith, a 12-year veteran of the New York art scene, has her first Canadian exhibition this summer at the Galerie René Blouin in Montreal, from June 3 to June 30. Like many artists working today, her area of concern is the human body, a theme that she attends to in the most literal terms imaginable. Cast-iron intestines, bronze models of the male and female uro-genital systems and drawings of swarming sperm and hovering ova make up her work, as well as large-format Cibachromes of exhumed bog people, victims of Celtic ritual slayings in Northern Europe. Smith, who trained as an emergency medical technician, sees her art activity as "mending work" on the ruptured continuity between people's spiritual and corporeal selves, a distinction that she perceives as an arbitrary construct. Like Canadians Betty Goodwin and Jana Sterbak (both artists who show with Blouin), Smith has a metaphysical bent and a sense of the human body and its parameters that is somewhat morbid and thoroughly intriguing.
Sarah Milroy

Arthur Kroker is the Marshall McLuhan of the late '80s. Author/editor (with his wife Marilouise Kroker) of such influential tract-anthologies as *Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America* (1987), Kroker, who here describes himself, rather unfortunately, as "the Canadian virus," is determined to "invade the postmodern mind, replicate its master genetic code" and "endlessly proliferate critical thinking." Kroker has taken his latest flashy step in that direction with the production of *Panic Encyclopedia* (New World Perspectives, CultureTexts Series, 1989, $9.95), immodestly subtitled *The Definitive Guide to the Postmodern Scene*.

The *Encyclopedia*, manned by Kroker and a committee of hebephrenic bright young things, functions as a kind of seismograph, registering and interpreting tremors reverberating from new socio-cultural phenomena (Panic Elvis, Panic Doughnuts, Panic Ovaries, Panic Mythologies, etc.). Arranged alphabetically as a quick-access handbook, *Panic Encyclopedia* takes it as a given that the real language of power in postmodern culture is the language of science and technology. Kroker's (and his collaborators') high-speed glosses on the hitherto uninterpreted, seemingly ephemeral, techno-fuelled agendae of socio-cultural events (all interpreted under the sign of frenzied activity: The Hyper) are tumbled at the reader as a prose model of our collective acquisition of the hyperreal. Whether or not such hypercriticism as a response to hyperreality ultimately induces an operative calm (as Kroker hopes) or catatonia, serenity or exhaustion, remains unresolved. Composed of brief but hectic meditations on contemporary life, mini-epiphanies that all of us experience in what is sometimes an insufficiently articulated form, *Panic Encyclopedia* is heady stuff, abrasive, uneven, brilliant and annoying, its central value being its way of expressing, as Alexander Pope put it in his *Essay on Criticism* (1711), "what oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd."
Robert Mycroft



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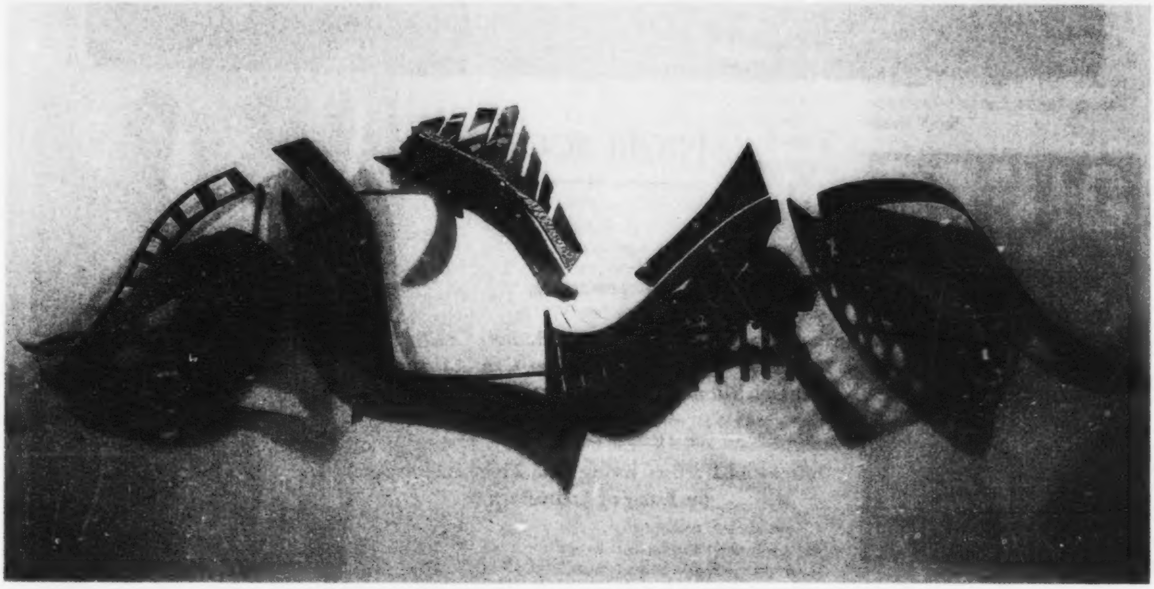

Joie de Vivre, 1989, painted laminated wood, 40" x 136" x 12"

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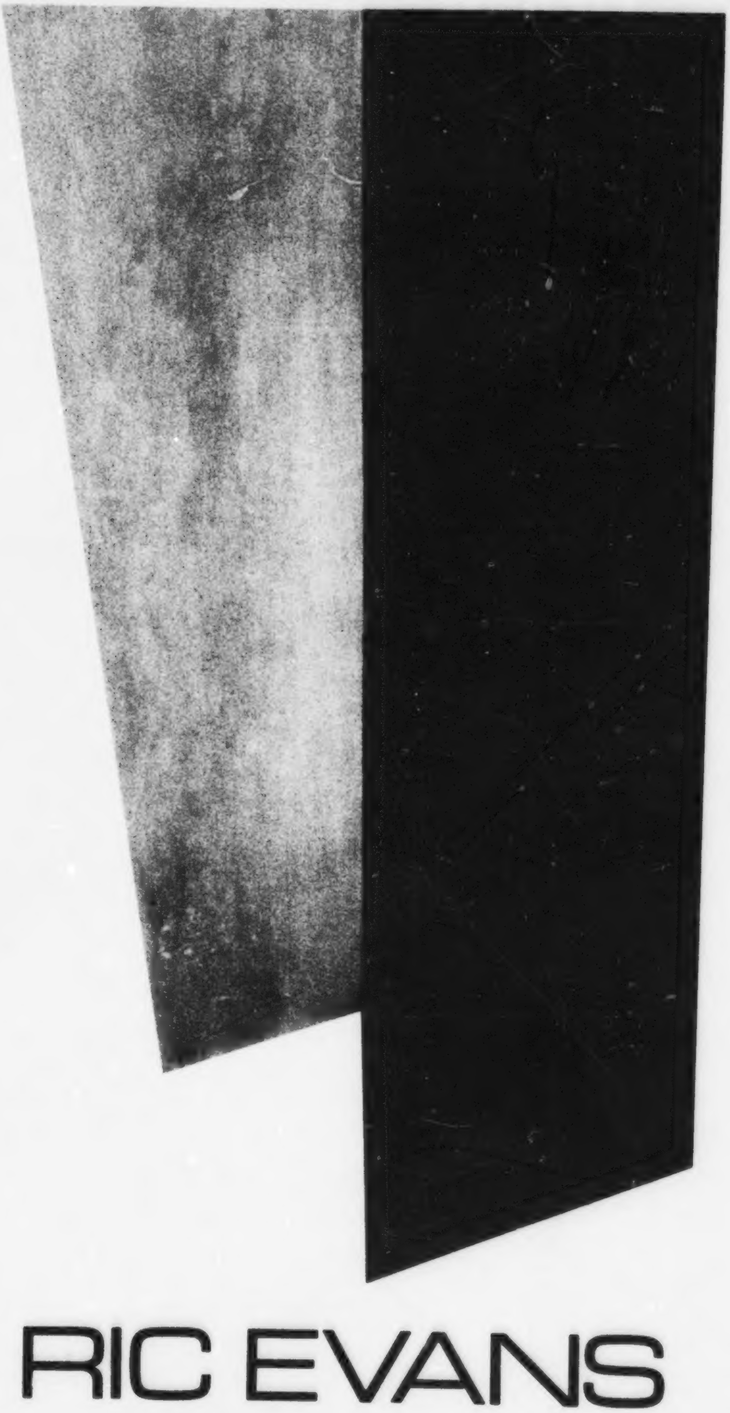

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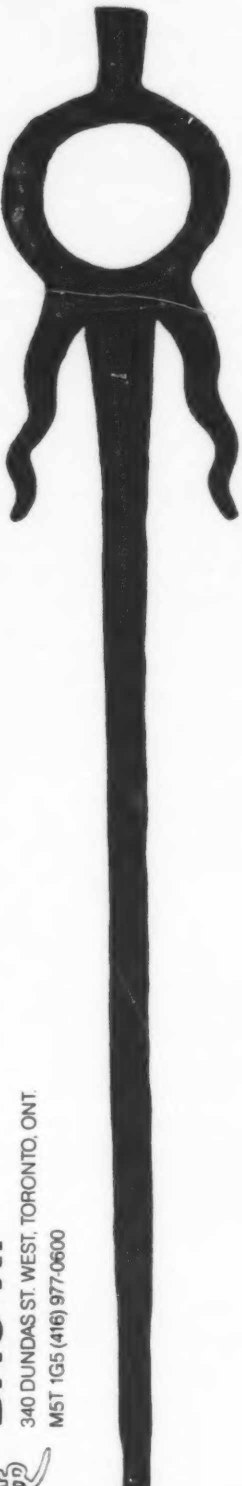

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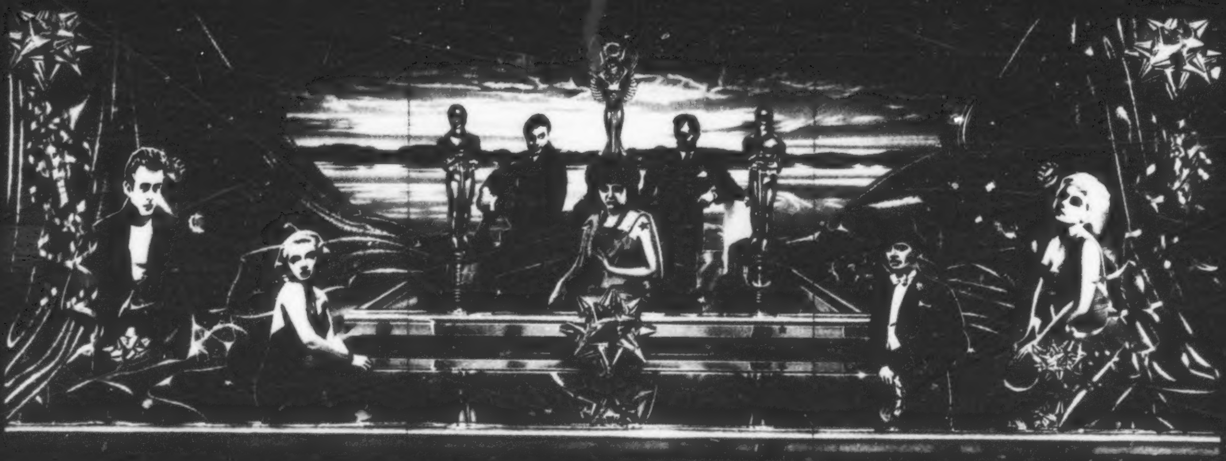

"Rainbow", 1988, acrylic on canvas, 6.5 x 17 feet

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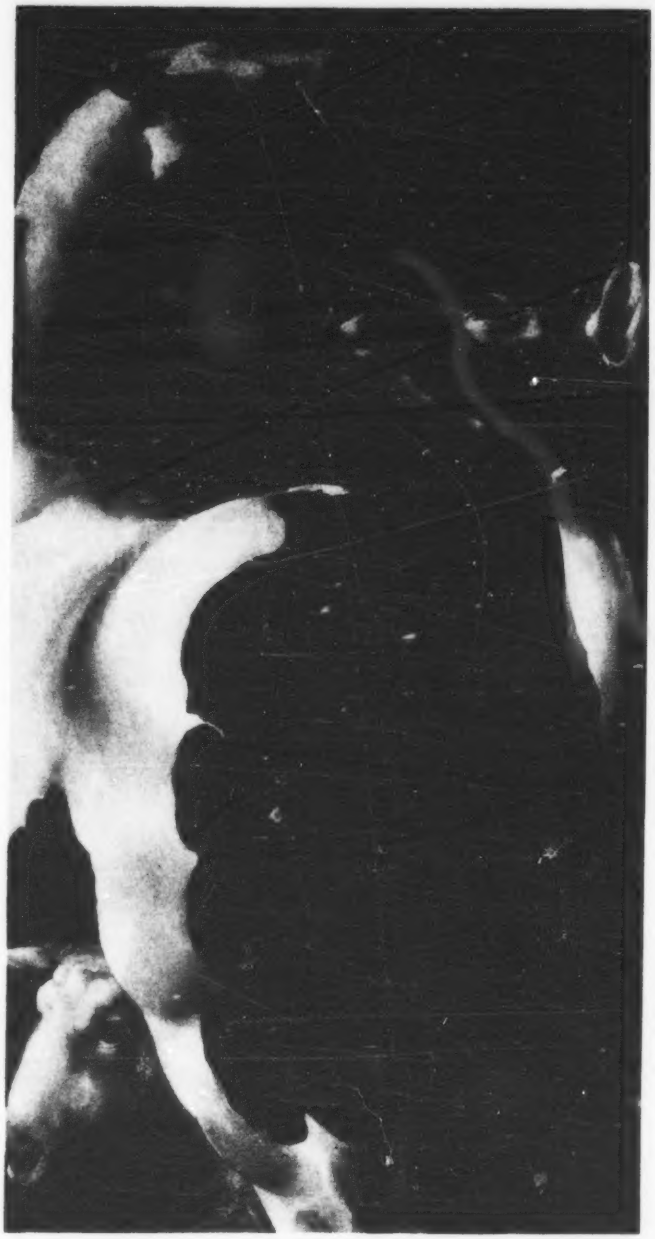
LINDEE CLIMO



LINDEE CLIMO was born and raised in the United States where she started to breed and exhibit livestock at the age of ten years. She later studied medical illustration at the University of Arizona and at California State University.

Lindee came to Canada in 1970 where she established herself as a livestock breeder in P.E.I. In 1974 she took up painting, with her animals serving as her principal subject matter. Recognition of her considerable talent as a painter came soon after, with a major exhibition of her work at the Art Gallery of the Confederation Centre in Charlottetown, P.E.I. Success followed quickly, and examples of Lindee's work now hang in many major public and private collections in Canada.

Her first book for children, Chester's Barn, *won the Amelia Francis Howard-Gibbon Medal as the best children's book published in Canada in 1983. Her second children's book,* Clyde, *was published to critical acclaim in 1986 and was nominated for the Amelia Francis Howard-Gibbon Medal award. Lindee has been the subject of a popular CBC-TV documentary, as well as several magazine articles.*

She currently lives in the beautiful Annapolis Valley, on a farm where she is surrounded by the animals that she loves to paint.

Cox's Orange Apples, *1988, oil on canvas, 44 x 23 in.*

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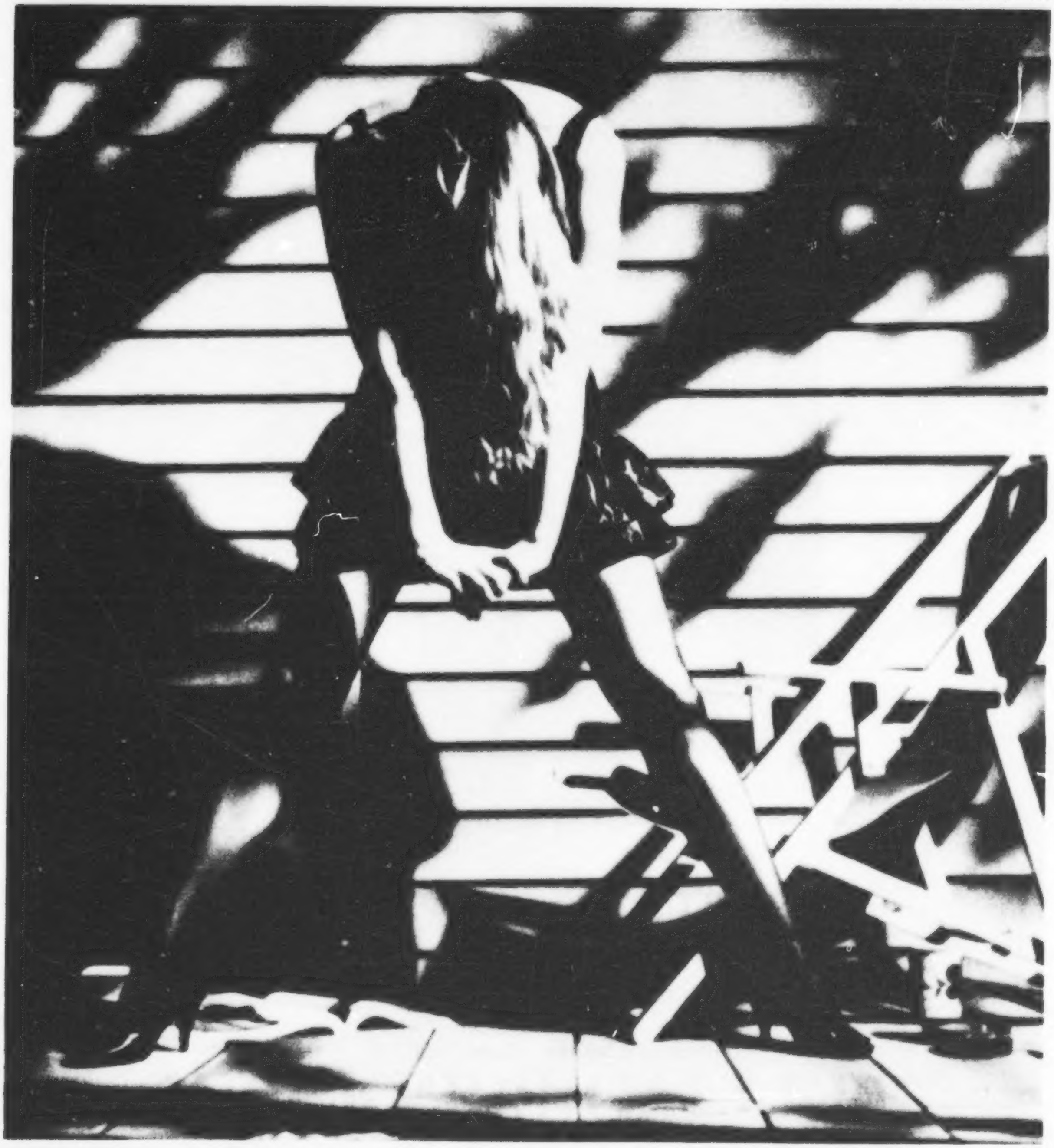

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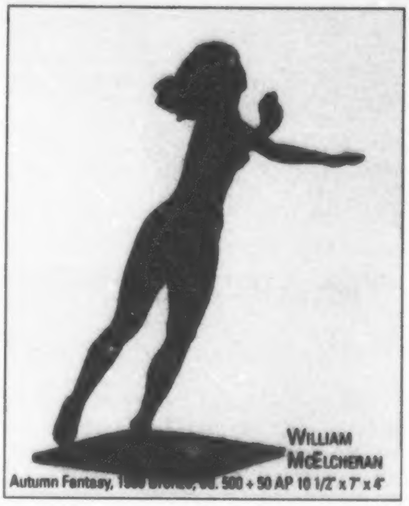
Eagle, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 9 1/4" x 14" x 4"

MICHAEL SNOW
Wood Calling Bronze, [illegible] + 50 AP 5" x 13" x 8 1/4"

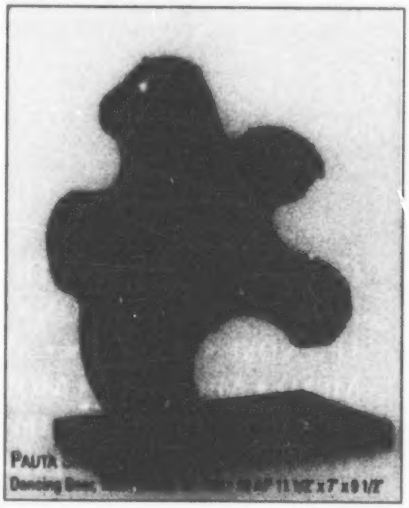
TONY URQUHART
Cairn, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 12" x 5" x 5 1/2"



WILLIAM McELCHERAN
Autumn Fantasy, [illegible] 500 + 50 AP 10 1/2" x 7" x 4"

DON BONHAM
SLD/89 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 11" x 7 3/4" x 3 1/2"

DAVID PELLETIER
Bottom, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 9" x 7" x 6 1/2"



PAUTA [illegible]
Dancing Bear, [illegible] 50 AP 11 1/2" x 7" x 9 1/2"

WALTER [illegible]
Mother and Child, [illegible] Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 12 1/2" x 8 1/4" x 6 1/2"

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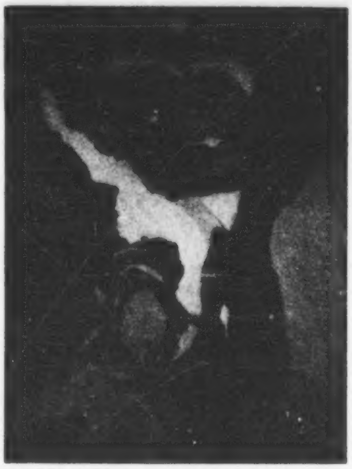

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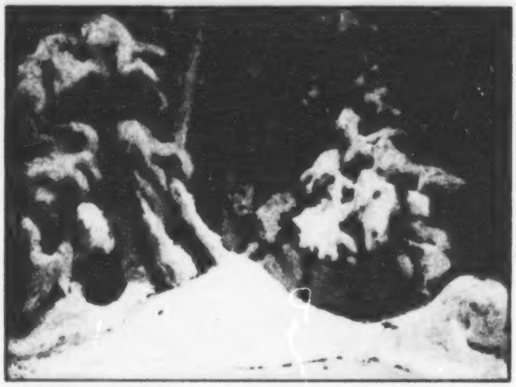

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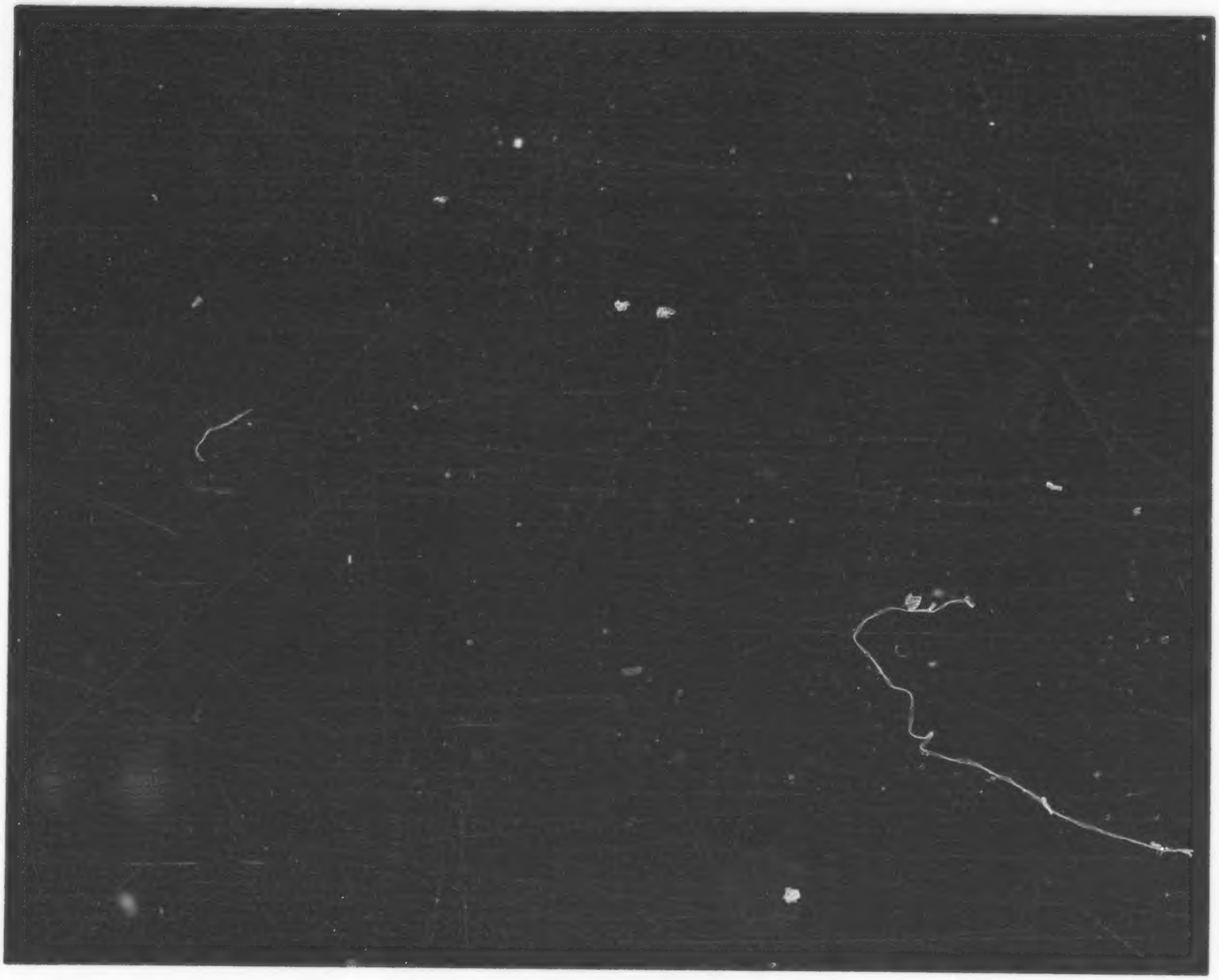

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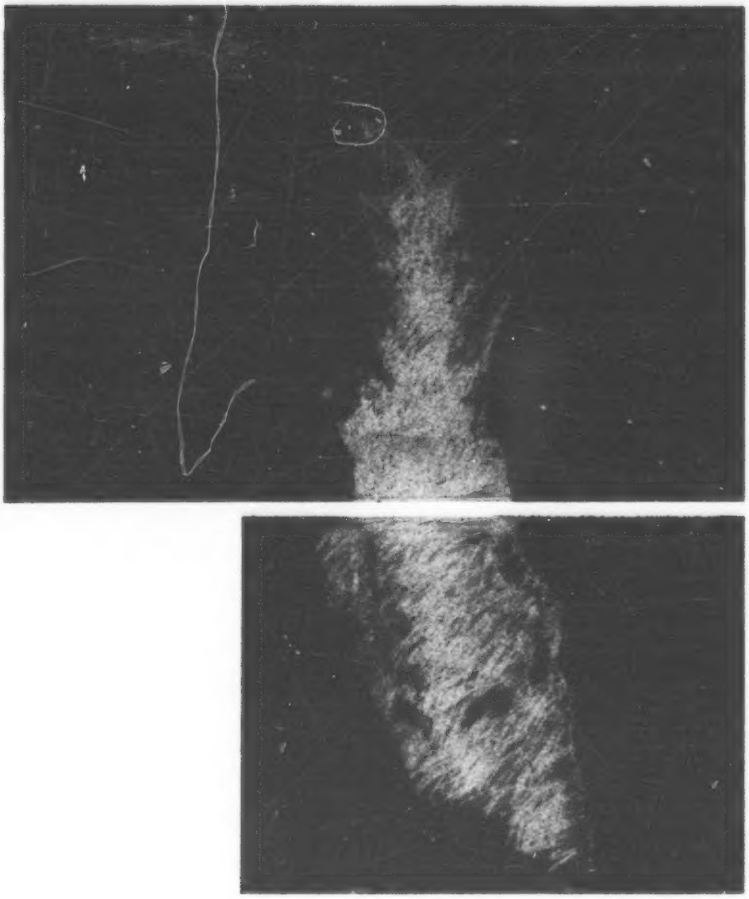

"Water #14", constructed chalk drawing, 1989, 40" x 60" - 30" x 40"

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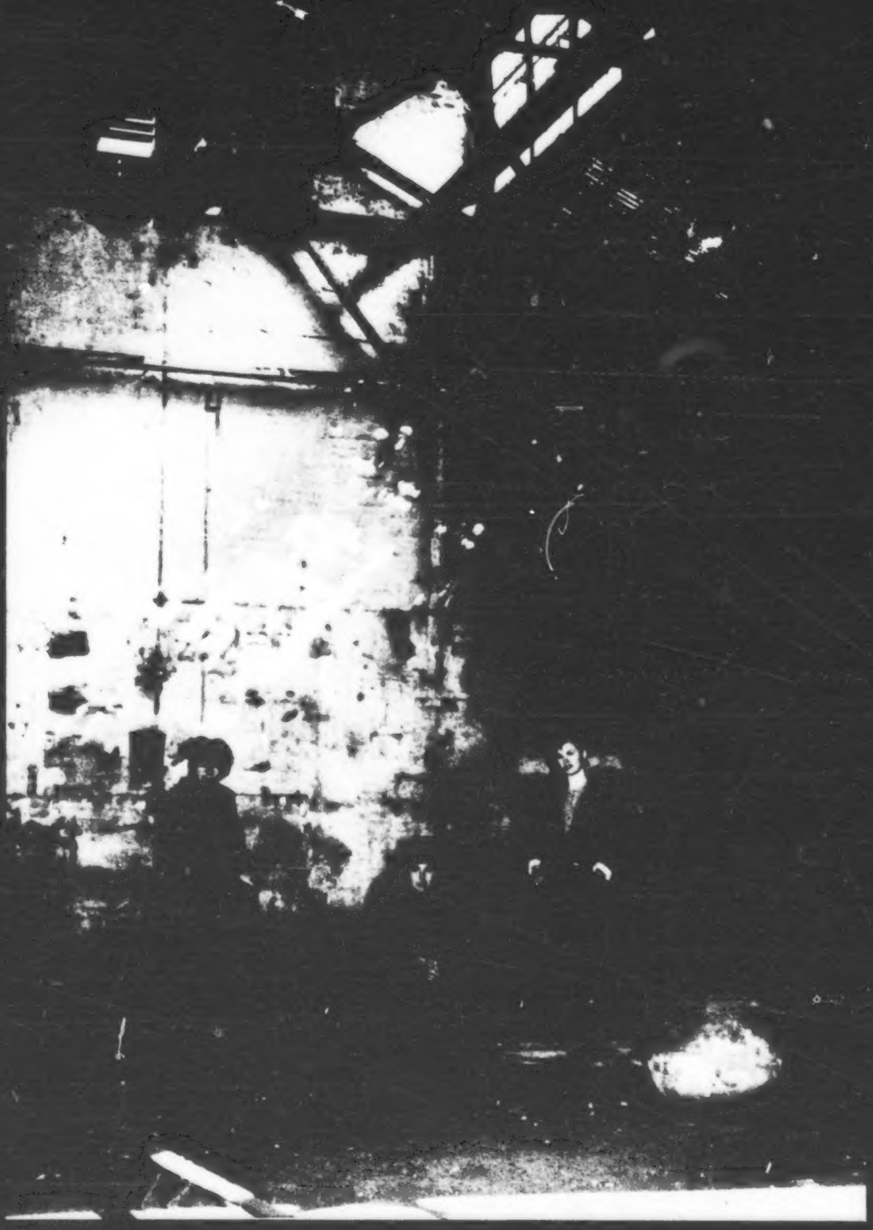

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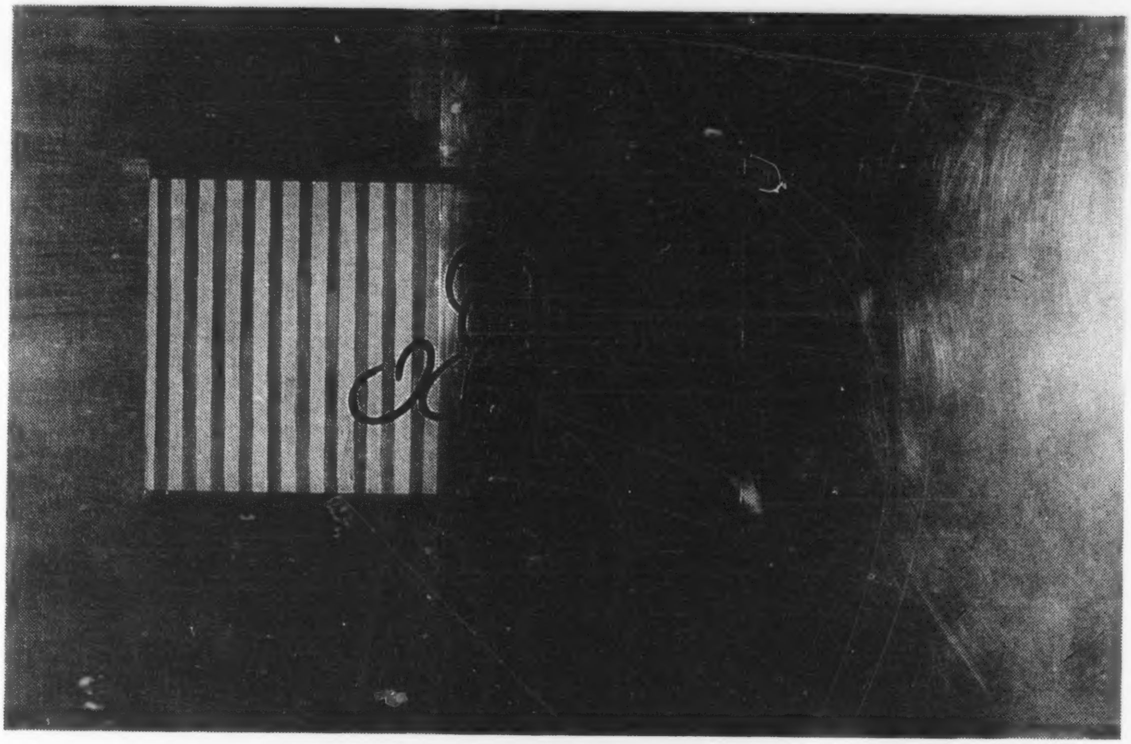

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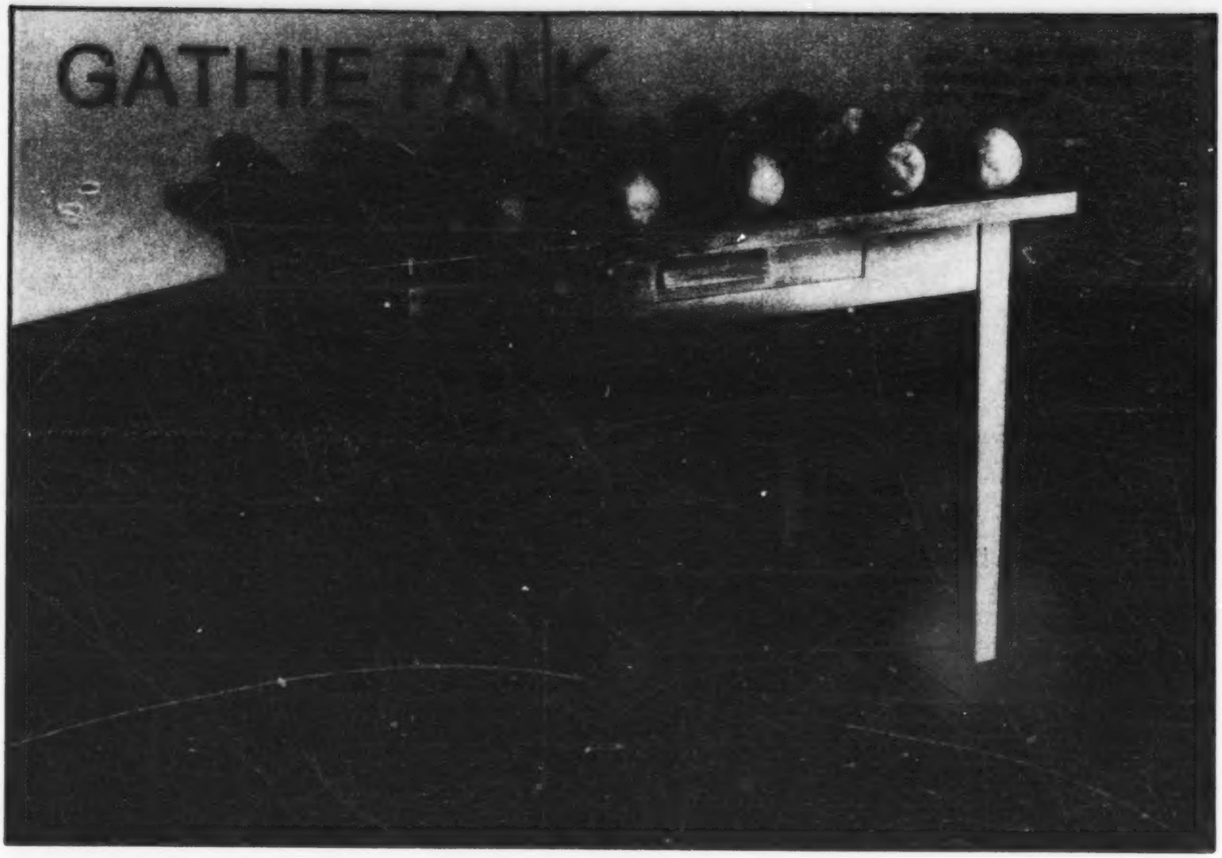

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GAR SMITH'S EXPLORATIONS
INTO THE PERFORMANCE
OF SOUND AND LIGHT HAVE
GENERATED AN ADVANCED
ENCODING OF MYTH
AND METAPHOR

TEXT BY GARY MICHAEL DAULT

ILLUMINATION DANCE

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM SKUDRA

Gar Smith's career began 21 years ago with a silent fanfare and visual drum roll called *Noon, 1968*, a color photograph of the sky overhead, the camera held straight up on a sunny day. There is no figure in the photograph to stand against the ground of infinite, pearlescent blue, no bird or cloud or airplane, no tree branches nodding in from the frame to announce scale. And so the photograph has no scale, no understandable depth of field. What you see is uninflected space, the camera's seeing forever on this clear day.

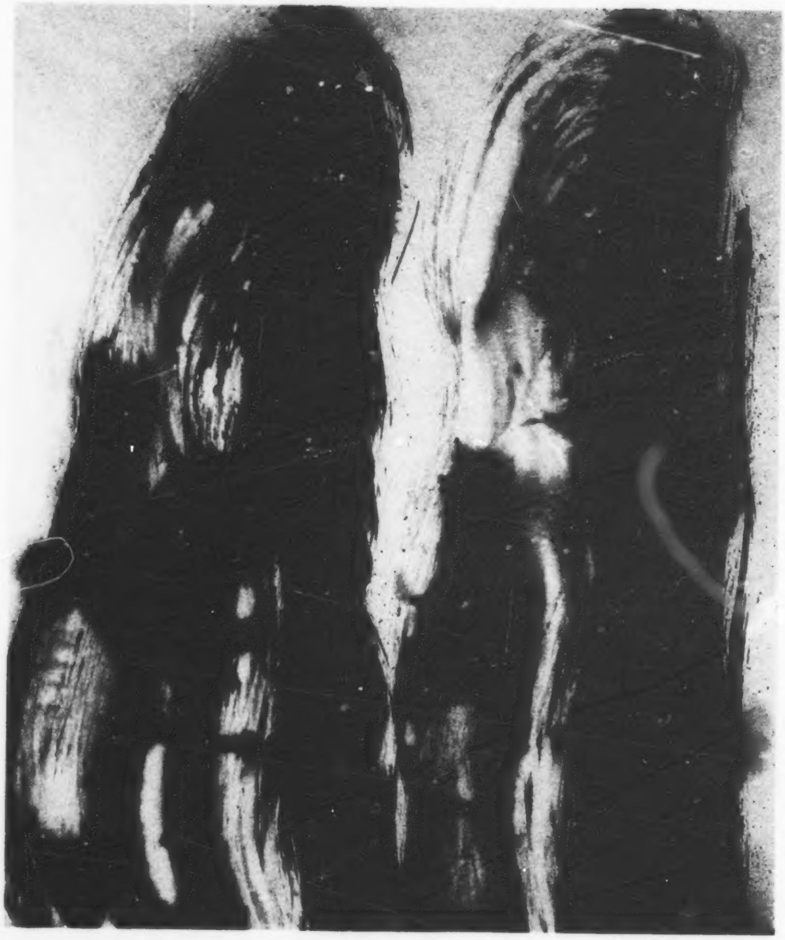
In fact, there *is* something to see beyond infinite blueness and overhead endlessness. The photograph is also a plane of chemical actions, an enlarged swarm of bluish atoms of colored light assembled and fixed by the photo finisher. The viewer's vision is thus halted at a certain point of technical limitation, modifying the photograph's final effect so that it both is and is not a highway to heaven. And yet what the camera was pointed at and duly recorded was assuredly bright blue firmament and the darkness of deep space beyond. *Noon, 1968* is simulta-

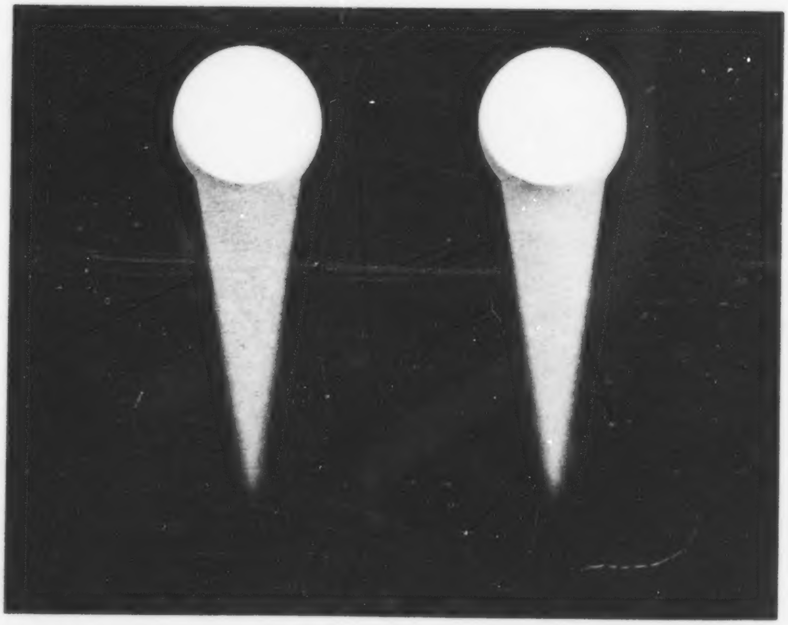
Avenir (16mm film stills from a series) 1971-74
Courtesy: Canada Council Art Bank

neously an alignment with the expectations of the natural world and a lyrical fiction: an elegant manifestation of a famous waggish gloss on a line by poet Robert Browning — a man's reach must exceed his grasp or what's a metaphor?

Metaphors, writes Hannah Arendt in a famous preface to a collection of essays by Walter Benjamin, "are the means by which the oneness of the world is poetically brought about." That oneness, the curiously persistent objective of mystics, scientists, design visionaries, some poets and certain artists of cosmological ambition and culturally evolutionary predilections, has informed Gar Smith's art from the beginning. That and (paradoxically) a fascination with limits, boundaries, closures. The bridge between the two, between Smith's investigations into the nature of various modalities of curtailment and his abiding interest in the big freedoms of transcendence, is often fashioned from the mechanisms of metamorphosis — the very stuff of metaphor. A great deal of Smith's work involves this energetic conversion of confinement to release (praxis makes perfect) as it is embodied in the changes of meaning that come to light when both physical forms and their assigned meanings are simultanously reframed — often by a quickening exploration of the creative fluidities of language.

Smith's work is galvanized into being by the push of words. *The Food of Love* (1981), for example, built around the casting of sets of cheap French Duralex dishes into brass bells, is generated from the fact that *vaisselle* (dish) appears to have reminded Smith of *vaisseau*, which means a large cooking implement, a large ship, or the nave of a church, above which is the bell tower, the "spire of inspiration," as Smith puts it, and the site of the ringing out of bells — music as the food of love, "the only arms possible in a





Above left: *Hairy World Trade* 1982
Photo chemicals on B&W photo paper
20 x 24 in.
Photo: Ken Elliott

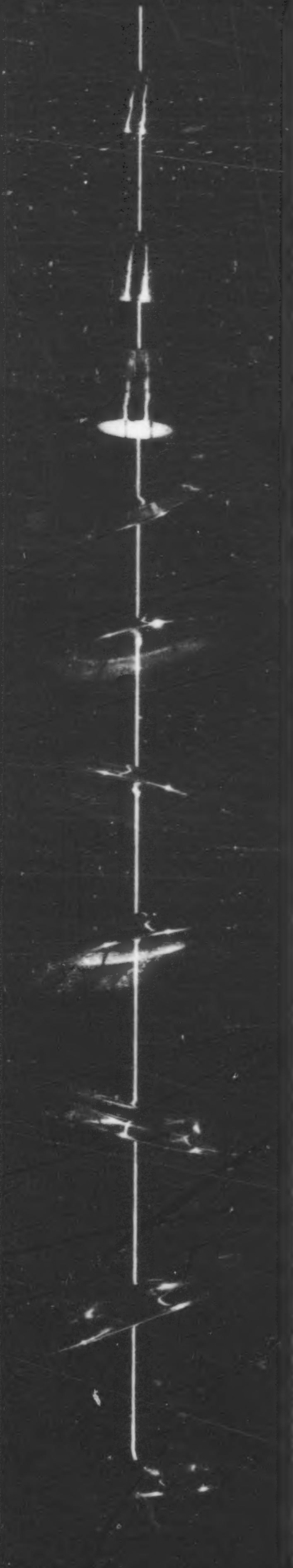
Left: *Capital Teeth* 1978
Print from photogram negative
80 x 60 in.

war against war." Similarly, in the camera-less photography work Smith was doing during the '70s, there is a constantly reconceptualizing slippage of meanings whereby the silver-imbued chemical solutions of the photographic process ("black silver") give rise to linguistic musings upon the presence of silver-as-money ("*argent*") and therefore as commodity, as capital, as washed (laundered) assets, as oppression, as salts (savor) in suspension, as reflection (mirror), as fixity and as stasis (which helps to explain Smith's obsessive attempts to push the envelope of photographic orthodoxy and make photo works that would be as spontaneous and as free from the imperatives of photography's time-honored methods and purposes as possible).

The curtailed transcendence of *Noon, 1968*, where a literal view of endlessness had become, of necessity, a proof of the *idea* of endlessness merely, was followed by Smith's *Notes on Light, 1969-70*. Here, Smith foreswore the mythopoeic verticality of *Noon, 1968* to set out on a quest of epic horizontality, a photographic trek across Canada via the Trans-Canada Highway in lyrical pursuit of the nation's sunrises and sunsets. Smith divided the country into 30 sections, each one 265 kilometres wide. Smith would drive the 265 kilometres, then stop to take 40 color photographs, one every two minutes (20 facing east at sunrise and 20 facing west at sunset). All in all, 1,200 slides were projected along the gallery wall as a panorama, five images wide. The result was an encyclopedia of national light, a long, still, photographic gaze upon the polarities of light that bracket the country, the metaphorical yes and no of sunrise/sunset. The exhibition was shown at Toronto's Isaacs Gallery in 1970 and afterwards at the National Gallery, the Paris Biennale and the Vancouver Art Gallery.

In 1971, Smith drained the color-romanticism from the sunrise/sunset slides, exhibiting a selection of these pastoral views printed as large black and white photostats — the bleached-out bones of the previous show's fleshy Technicolor radiance. Big, grainy blowups of the slides, the photostats were more inspectable, more readable, than the glowing projections (photo-*static* as stillness), more muzzy and imprecise and molecular like *Noon, 1968* (photo-static meaning static as interference, as noise), and, because of the leeching of the color, somehow more documentary (photo-statistical) than the touristic gorgeousness of the slides (which were photo-ecstatic). A black and white sunrise or sunset isn't scenery any longer but rather news. *Notes on Light: Prints and Flags*, as this second exhibition was called, was loss and gain, was photo-transformative. The two exhibitions together became a kind of photosynthesis.

With *Notes on Light: Prints and Flags* behind him, Smith spent the next two years travelling through Europe and through Africa and Asia. Along the way, he kept a 16mm filmic diary, shooting passages of portraiture from which, after he returned to Canada, he selected the faces that appealed most to him and enlarged them into stills in a 35mm format, mounting them as a series of grainy studies of anthropological variousness and plenitude, a homage to the poor and the working classes of three continents. Exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1973 as a waist-high ribbon of portraits, 275 of them, the work, titled *Avenir* ("the future"), was, as Smith wrote in his notes, "a search for the pure energy in human nature." Criticized at the time by a number of reviewers for what they saw as its sentimentality (Peter White, in the *The Globe and Mail*, called the portraits "sticky" and compared the work to Coca-Cola's then current brotherhood-of-man TV commercial), the exhibition was at least granted "innocence." Today the portraits in accumulation, which was, after all, the way they were presented, maintain the poignancy Smith originally found in them. Never intended as a mechanically intense socialist work, *Avenir* was more (as Smith put it) "social" — socialist only "as communication and interaction," as a "voyage of continually unfolding awareness." In total, the work posited the existence of an apolitical Eden of unity. Formally, it

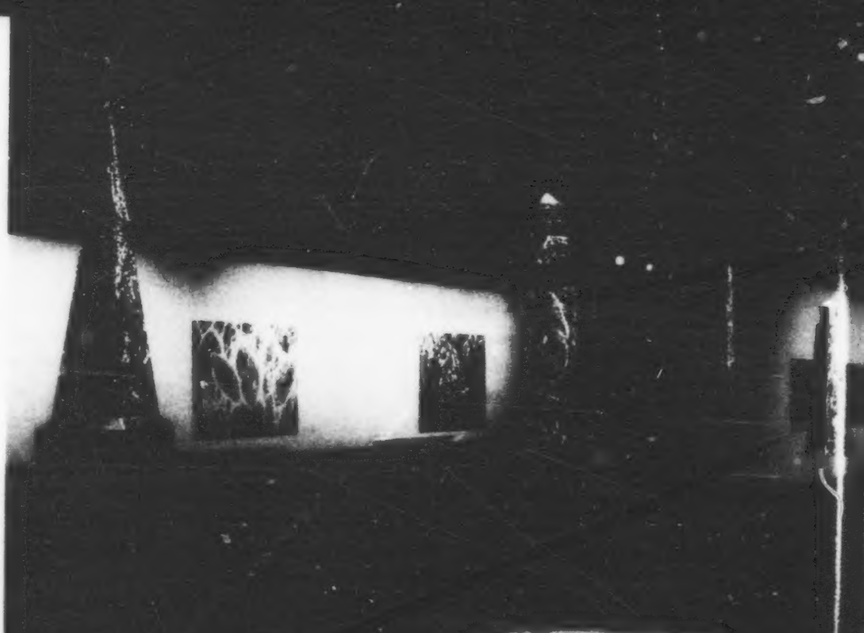


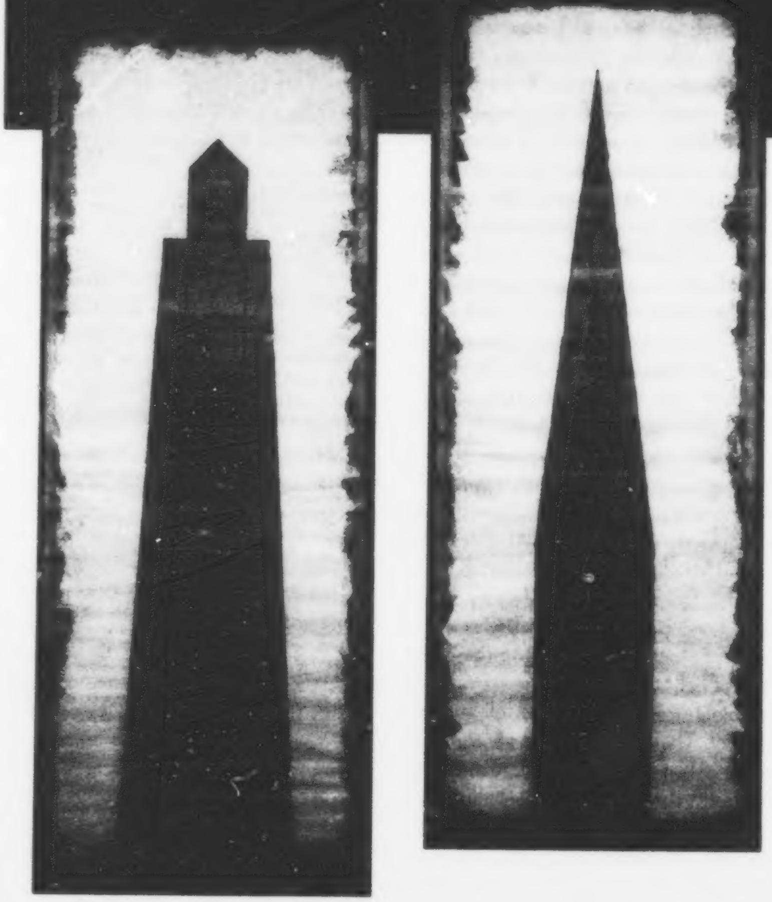
The Food of Love (detail) 1981
65 suspended brass elements
8 x 20 ft.
Photo: Paul Campbell

bore a telling relationship, in its bracketing, in its cornucopic inclusiveness, to the *Notes on Light* of a few years before.

In the photographic works that followed *Avenir*, there was a withdrawal from a certain explicitness of content or, rather, the closing down of an immediately readable societal content in return for the production of a field of metaphorical transaction. This was in some measure a function of Smith's rejection of what he has always thought of as the procedural arrogance of photography's classic givens. It was in part a wryly undertaken flight from instructions about not opening film in the light under any circumstances and that sort of technical toeing of the line that led Smith to explore the possibilities of camera-less photography as a more direct, natural, spontaneous way of getting at issues that had come to occupy his attention. In an almost Oedipal defection from the high-art paternalism of photographic rectitude, Smith made monochromatic "paintings" on sheets of photo paper left out in the light. He fired a ruby laser down the length of his darkened studio at large sheets of photosensitive paper pinned up on the wall, resulting in time-delayed memories of calligraphy written upon the air like a child with a sparkler, a choreography of after-images (the *Long Hand Light Pencil* drawings). He made pin-hole photos using entire rooms as the camera. And he produced a brilliant series of photoelectric monotypes (*Still Moving Photo Video*) made by applying photosensitive paper to the screen of a TV monitor, thus trapping images photochemically in a manner more akin to surrealist *frottage* than to any other method of image-capture.

The major body of camera-less photo works Smith made during these years was exhibited in 1978 as the *Earth Stars, Futures Markets* series. The series began during a sojourn in Paris, the fruit of a scattering of baguette crumbs on the artist's tablecloth at breakfast, a compelling dispersal of organic stuff littering a neutral ground. Later the breadcrumbs scattered on a giant sheet of photo paper made a convincing equivalent to a drift of stars across the black void of the exposed paper, a Milky Way of breadcrumbs, the stars and planets as food and energy. "Futures markets," Smith wrote in his notes, "are speculation on the futures of com-





Top: *I Give Bliss, I Give Warning* 1982-85
Collection: Canada Council Art Bank

Bottom: Drawings for *I Give Bliss, I Give Warning*
Acrylic, oil stick on *New York Times* newspaper
Each 22 x 60 in.

modities of society, of economics.... Lights of the future from lights of the past.... Are the stars our future destination or our place of origin?... Are stars *white holes?*"

Gradually, nets of interdependent symbols and conceptual shorthands strove and contested within the works. Smith made dark photo-galaxies sparkled with stars made from tiny droplets of oil; he made star clusters from pieces of coal (*Fool's Cold*), grains of wheat, lentils, pennies (constellations of cold, hard cash). Once, he made a huge photogram of one stellar penny glowing on the black paper like a bright moon in a telescope. *Capital Teeth*, one of the most metaphorically expansive works in the series, consists of two white luminous discs with delicately shaded cones depending from them: a very large blowup (in negative) of two bullets standing on the paper, their shadows leaning away from the light. Their title is a compression of Smith's metaphoric discursiveness; capital means splendidly appropriate (a capital idea), bureaucratic (as in capital city), surplus value as oppression (capitalism) and as having to do with the head (capitulate, capital punishment), upper case. The bullets are, at the same time, teeth (as the ripping, tearing, business end of a gun), coercion, rapaciousness, economic as well as bodily brutality. A parallel photogram of 1,500 bullets standing flat side down on the paper was called *Materialist Dialectics* and looked like a shivery stargate to hyperspace, the receding universe of late-capitalist rationale, the end-stopped space of materialist imperatives.

Eventually Smith began to paint directly on black and white photosensitive paper (1979), using a brush and certain photochemicals as pigment. By staging limited chemical warfare between fix (acid) and developer (base), by manipulating whites (the fix dissolves the photo emulsion on the paper) and darks (the developer oxidizes the photo emulsion), he was able to simulate colors on his paper canvases. The mixtures of fix and developer ripened into odd, earthy hues — purples, browns, greenish-greys, creams, all the colors of chemical breathing, as the hydrogen of acidity strove with the oxygen of base to create an entire palette in the wake of their molecular friction. Like *Noon, 1968*, the photo-paintings Smith was making provided an illusion of depth with (as Smith put it) "one micron of chemical thinness."

Smith's last photo-paintings were the works of his *Urban Nature Series* (1982), works made during a year in New York. Small *tours de force* of Smith's metaphoric concerns, these dense, rich pictures depict anthropomorphized buildings, fearsome Manhattan towers whose rows of windows have become demonic eyes and teeth, oppressive structures grimacing with the weight and pressure of their urban importance, perhaps going mad with it (his rich chocolatey World Trade Center towers are turning hairy and hysterical like werewolves under the moon). If these tortured buildings seem on the point of becoming articulate, to clamor, to speak in architectural tongues, it may well be that there was some crossover between this declarativeness and the sounding utterances of the sculptural pieces he was working on at the time — the tower bells that would eventually make up an exhibition at the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto called *I Give Bliss, I Give Warning* (1985). "When I was studying architecture at the University of Toronto," Smith told me once, "I wanted to design buildings you could strike like a gong or play like an organ." The tower bells get pretty close to that.

Smith's introduction to bells seems to have occurred during his travels in India where, living in ashrams, visiting temples, being summoned to *puja* (prayers), he was tumbled precipitously and frequently into the auditory space carved out of the day's ordinariness by their sound, summoned into the bell's sonic moment of brilliant duration "washed clean of the past and future" that poet Paul Valéry once referred to as a "diamond of time." The first bells Smith designed (gongs, really) were made in 1975 by casting chapati, the Indian bread, in bronze. Here, food ceased to be food and turned into a sound, a cry, a lament, an alarm, an admonition. The next bells, icons of fullness and plenty (in contrast to the chapati gongs) were the castings in brass that Smith made in Italy of the aforementioned French Duralex dishes. Like the bronze chapatis, the brass Duralex dishes (shown at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 1981 as *The Food of Love* installation) were highly charged with irony and transformative programming. "For me," Smith wrote, "one of the strongest images of brass is in its use as a material for bullets, bombs...thus the [artillery] shell is retrieved and transformed into a bowl...from a destructive function to a maintenance function and from there to a creative function, that of a bell...." Of course, to make a bowl into a bell, you have to drill a hole into it to hang it from. Which makes it useless any longer as a bowl. Metaphor giveth and taketh away.

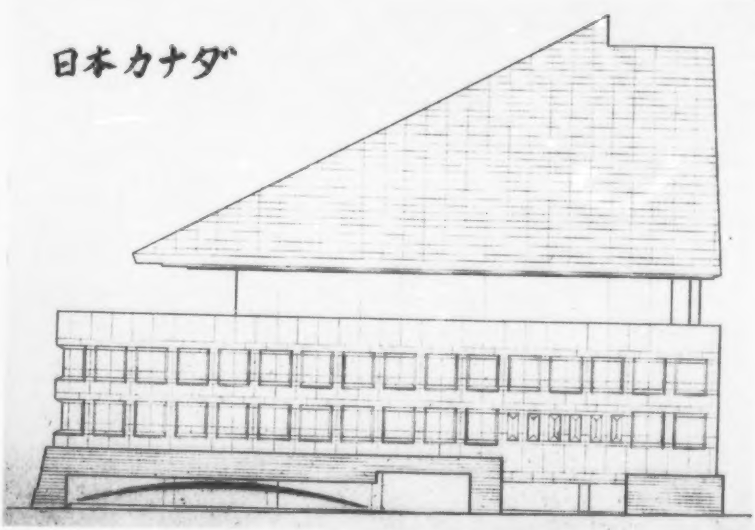
I Give Bliss, I Give Warning (1985) presented a new series of bells, cast again in brass and taking the sociologically and historically provocative shapes of a cathedral spire, a grain elevator, a smokestack, a skyscraper, a lighthouse, a missile shell and a plinth shaped like Cleopatra's needle (a generalized bell of the past?). Together, these splendid and disturbing bells seemed to posit a rolling-up of history into a sonic broth of tragi-comic sameness in extension; when these brass emblems of the built environment are struck, their commingled soundings ring out an ambivalent message of worship and warning from a culture in which commerce and spirituality, aggression and haven, murdering and making, are submerged in a chorus of contradiction that is, for better or worse, the song of ourselves. The bell is a central symbol of creative power. It is also a weighty reminder of finality. This dialogue between what utopian architect Paolo Soleri (who also makes bells) would call the Alpha God and the Omega Seed is a kind of dance — like the generative and destructive and regenerative dance of Shiva. A dance of terror and of joy.

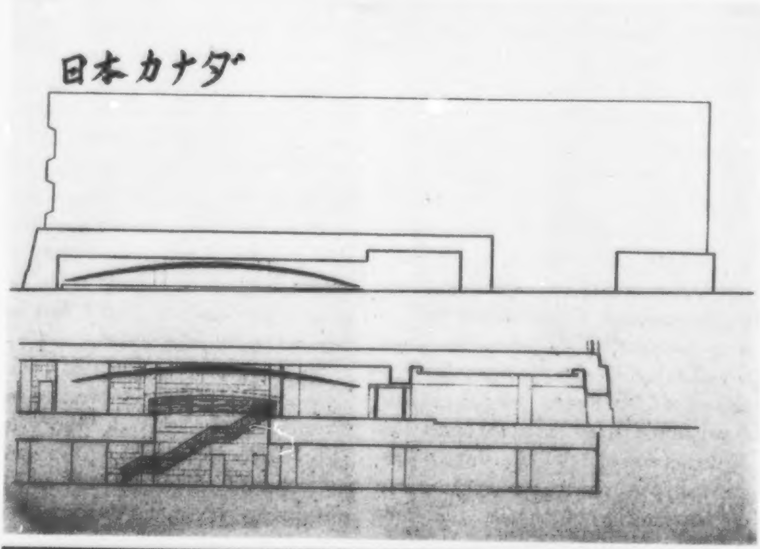
Since 1985, Smith has been making an ambitious kind of print — a print that recalls the transformation of the *Notes on Light* sunrise/sunset slides into the more sombre black and white blowups of the subsequent *Prints and Flags*: latex castings of portions of rock face, outcroppings of the Canadian Shield in Northern Ontario. Because these sculptural surfaces are cast from a liquid latex that Smith brushes onto the surface of the rock, and because these latex coatings harden into the molds from which he makes his castings, the molds are, in a sense, negatives from which the positives are made. The whole process therefore reprises Smith's earlier preoccupation with photography. Here, too, is another kind of photogram (the rock faces are 3-D impressions as opposed to photography's 2-D impressions).

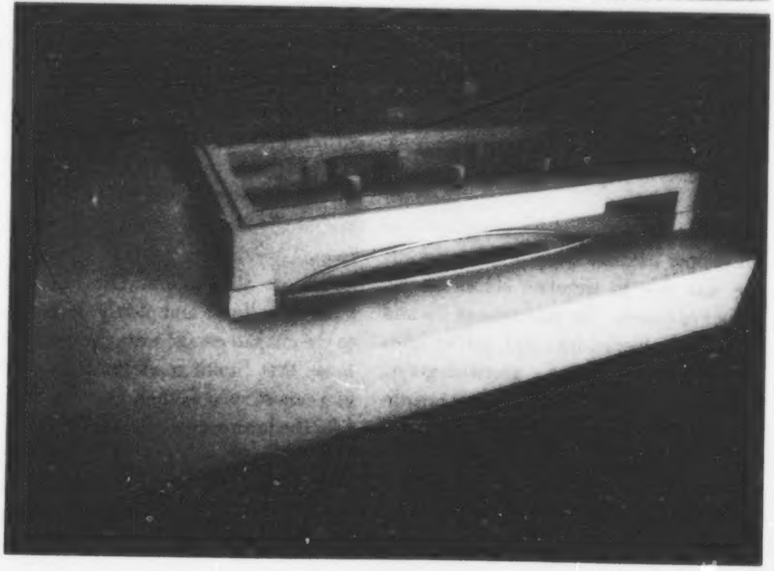
Some of the rock face casts are made into masks. Smith's agitation about the military and industrial disruption of the fragile ecology of the north has led him to see the rock faces as literal faces of the threatened, anthropomorphized life form that is the Canadian Shield itself. These faces are vulnerable, hurtable, mute but eloquent. The Shield he sees as a literal shield — protective but not strong enough to withstand military testing and industrial abuse. Smith has therefore drilled primitive eyeholes into some of the rock-face castings so that, as masks, they can look back at their oppressors, muster a long, intense gaze of accusation in the face of a largely heedless enemy. Nuclear waste drilled into holes in the rock, Smith mused recently, will look like smoking eye-holes in the enraged face of the sentient landscape. Some of the cast rock faces have been made into bells. They too ring out ambiguous messages of bliss and warning, the gaze of the rock-face masks being now transformed into a timeless, decaying sound.

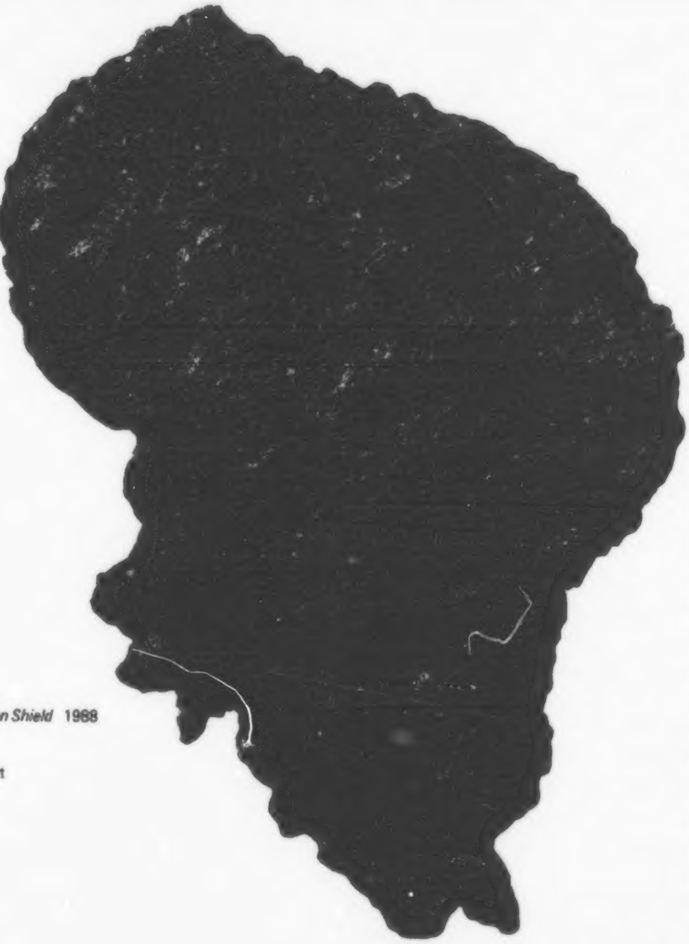
Smith's most recent project is a commission to provide two gigantic bells for the new Canadian embassy building in Tokyo. Designed by Toronto architect Raymond Moriyama in concert with the Shimizu Corporation of Tokyo, the building will be located on an eight-lane thoroughfare named Aoyamadori, in the high-profile Akasaka district at the centre of the city, across from the gardens of the Togugosho Imperial Grounds, home of the Emperor's family.

The building itself is predicated upon "two sets of metaphors.... One metaphor expresses a symbol of Canadian spirit — Canada's natural heritage and industrial spirit linked by the people of Canada. Another metaphor expresses an ancient aspect of Japanese culture — Ikebana — the traditional Japanese art of flower arrangement. The basic structure of Ikebana can be expressed by Earth, People, and Heaven [the symbols of which are, respectively, a square, a circle or disc, and an equilateral triangle with one apex pointed directly upward]. The two metaphors are bridged by a common element









Above: *Canadian Shield* 1988
Bell-metal
17 x 24 in.
Photo: Ken Elliott

— the people." The people are to be incorporated into the design of the building through the abstraction of the five senses (touch is foregrounded by the presence of a rock "discovery wall" in the lower part of the building; taste is represented, rather bathetically, by the "Canadian food" served in the restaurant on the fourth floor; and so on). The three levels of Ikebana are echoed in a tripartite Canadian reading of the building's ascending levels as "natural heritage, people, industrial spirit" (however ruefully one observes the progress of progress, one nevertheless regrets that "heaven" is thus unequivocally parallelled to "industrial spirit").

Smith's bells, infinitely more sheer and delicate than their raw size would indicate (each of them is 21 metres long and weighs 1,400 kilograms), are to function, in Moriyama's Ikebana five-sense scheme for the building, as the embodiment of the sense of sound: the bells are resonant tubes that can be tuned and are designed to be played, as Aeolian flutes, by the variable overblowing of the wind as well as being sounded by electrically activated and electronically controlled strikers in the inside. The two bells are virtually identical, though their positioning is sufficiently different as to make them seem dissimilar. Each bell takes the form of an attenuated arch, the curvature of the earth, expressed as a double-pointed needle suspended from above and drooping gently, and with mathematical precision, toward the ground at each end. Smith's two great metal arcs thus not only provide Moriyama's sense of sound, but also function as subtle outerings of the Ikebana earth-people-sky ascension (and subsequent descent from sky to people to earth again).

The first of the bells, titled *Arc*, will be located at the entrance to the embassy (facing the eight-lane thoroughfare and the Emperor's gardens). This bell, which has a surface texture of rock, will be suspended above a long, boat-shaped pool. The pool will serve both to reflect the arc of the bell (and thus seems almost to complete the joining of the arc with its own illusory double) and to perform as a symbolic river (the water can be pumped through a drain at the lower end up to the higher end, at which point gravity will return it to the pump again), its slow but persistent movement reading as vitality and growth. The second bell, titled *Bow*, will be inside, suspended over a long footbridge that leads deeper into the building. This second bell, which has a surface texture of tree bark, echoes the rise and bend of the bridge, enacting the progress of its curvature overhead as if it were a kind of guide or beam to follow.

More formally and spiritually generalized than the culturally reflexive brass tower bells of *I Give Bliss, I Give Warning*, Smith's giant bells for Tokyo are majestic essays in diplomatic appropriateness and tact. The slow, understandable calculus of their plotted curves reads simultaneously as procedural caution and as a graceful incitement to completion and fulfilment. Harmonious vectors of rise and fall, of cultural difference and cultural agreement, the big bells hang over water and above the heads of the people as sounding icons of trust and objectifications of faith — epic parentheses within which two dissimilar cultures can proceed, sunrises and sunsets in metal that have grown articulate.

Top left: Drawing/model of front elevation, new Canadian Embassy, Tokyo (Moriyama and Teshima, Architects) showing *Arc*
Xerox, carved wood, rice paper
44 x 32 in.

Middle: Section drawing showing *Arc* and *Bow*
Xerox, carved wood, rice paper
44 x 32 in.

Bottom: Architectural model showing *Arc* and *Bow*
Mixed media, 34 x 38 in.

PURE VIRTUE

I Am and Not, I Freeze and Yet Am Burned,
Since From Myself Another Self I Turned.
—Elizabeth I

Three Sisters

IN HER TRILOGY OF PERFORMANCE WORKS, TANYA MARS EXPLORES THE ORIGIN OF THE FEMALE SPECIES

Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen, [illegible] in dress and mind, contemplates virginity, power, sex and death. She recommends means whereby chastity may be maintained and, if necessary, the loss of it disguised; she entertains the lords of war, religion and commerce for a picnic lunch à la Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*; she complains of men's desire for power in the state and in her bedroom; and finally, in the metaphorical shadow of names of other women from history, fairy tales, fiction and film — Anne Boleyn, Sleeping Beauty, Marilyn Monroe — Mars/Elizabeth symbolically sacrifices herself and calls out for her mother.

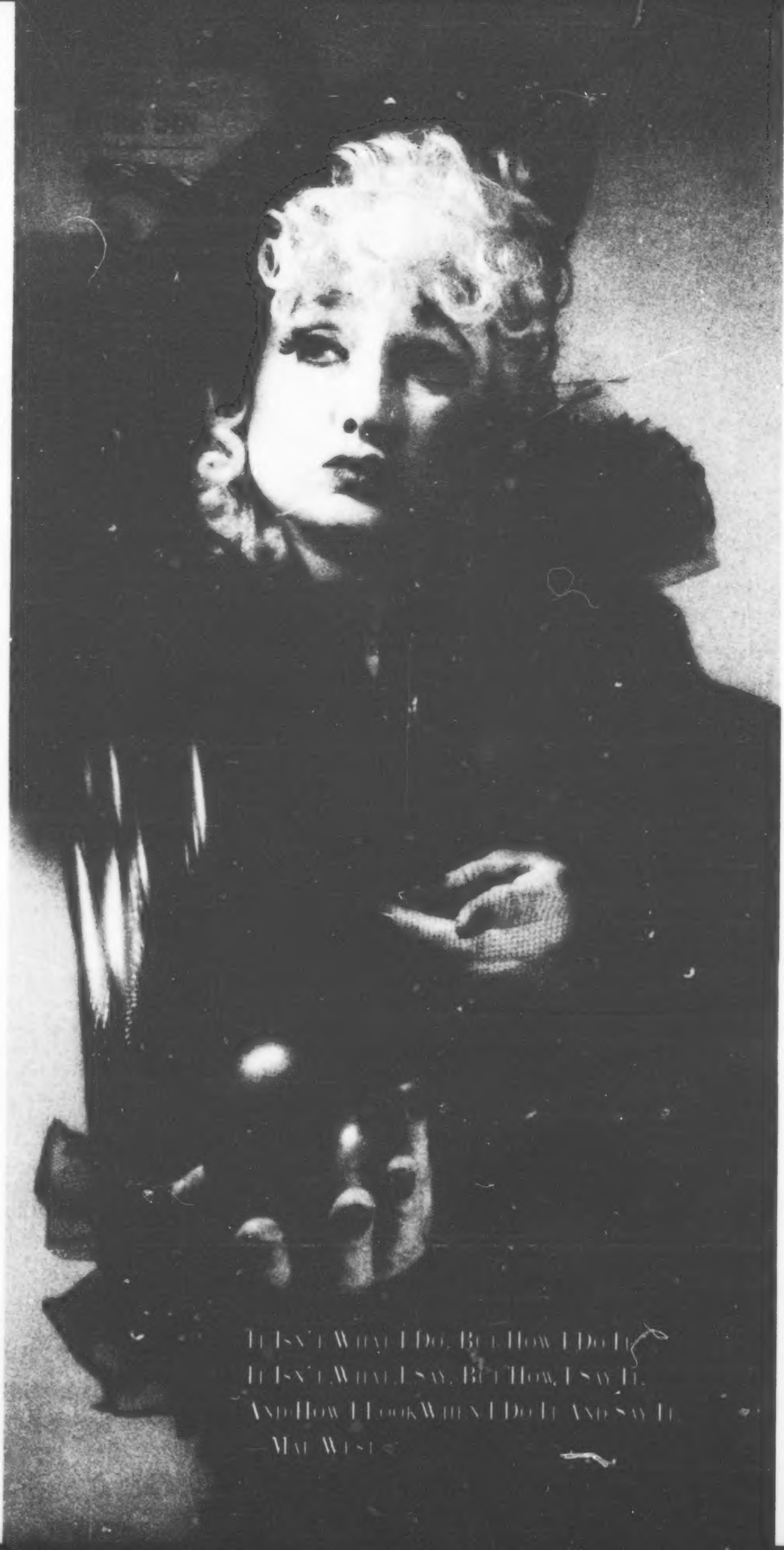
PURE VIRTUE, PURE SIN AND PURE NONSENSE compose a trilogy of performance works by Toronto artist Tanya Mars. They are the tales of two women and a girl, each in active pursuit of her desire. Elizabeth I in *Pure Virtue*, Mae West in *Pure Sin* and Alice (of Wonderland) in *Pure Nonsense* — a monarch, a sex symbol and a character of the imagination — navigate the perils of politics, sex and psychoanalysis by seizing power, staying single and having an adventure.

In Mars's performances, Elizabeth I attempts the impossible — lying down and doing sit-ups — in a dress built strictly for show and immobility. Alice's Wonderland is not a Victorian rabbit hole but a '60s psychedelic paradise in which the masters of psychoanalysis, Freud and Jung, stage their quarrels with Alice and each other to the musical strains of Jefferson Airplane and the visual backdrop of a light show. Likewise, Mae West steps off the 1930s movie screen and tries on a few other goddesses for size. She slips back in time to the beginnings of crea-

BY ELKE TOWN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID HLYNSKY

Mae West, as herself and as a variety of mythological heroines — Lilith, Pandora, Hecate — confronts the longstanding myths of women as the source of original sin in history, religion and philosophy. As she swaggers shamelessly into the pre-creation void and the Garden of Eden, Mae shakes off this blame and repossesses her body and sexuality, redirecting the blame to the men who were its source. With her one-liners she acknowledges and condones men's lust by giving a glimpse of what life could be like without their shame or their will to gain power and possession.



It Isn't What I Do, But How I Do It.
It Isn't What I Say, But How I Say It.
And How I Look When I Do It And Say It.
— Mae West

Alice investigates the social and psychic construction of sexual difference and challenges the essentialist myth that anatomy is destiny. When Alice discovers that she doesn't have a penis, Freud tells her that she has "lost" it. Alice searches for the privileged signifier in a world where the confusion and riddles of Carroll's Wonderland merge with the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Jung. True to all fairy tales, *Pure Nonsense* has a happy ending: what's lost is found. When the musical game "You put your left foot [arm, head, psyche, etc.] in" gets to "penis," Alice lifts her dress to discover that she indeed does have a penis in the form of a dildo.

PURE NONSENSE

WHY I HARDLY KNOW,
SIR. IN FACT, I HARDLY
REMEMBER ANYTHING AT ALL.
INDEED I DON'T EVEN KNOW
WHERE I LEFT MY PENIS.
—ALICE TO JUNG

tion, there to confront the holy and unholy clamorings of priests, philosophers and historians who, by asserting that women are the source of original sin, construct mythologies that conveniently disguise their own guilt and sexual desires.

The three performance works are a hybrid form, amalgams of burlesque, carnival-like spectacle and cathartic theatre. Like other performance pieces by artists, Mars's work takes its structural cues from theatre, visual art and literature, but its ideological cues, true to Mars's own investigation of women's power, have their roots in feminism. Becoming progressively more complex in staging and casting from work to work, each work unfolds through a series of interconnected tableaux that incorporate projected textual quotes and images, props, costumes, music and a cast of broadly drawn characters representing everything from Zeus, atomic subparticles and the Tree of Knowledge in *Pure Sin* to Freud and Jung as the Mad Hatter and the White Rabbit in *Pure Nonsense*.

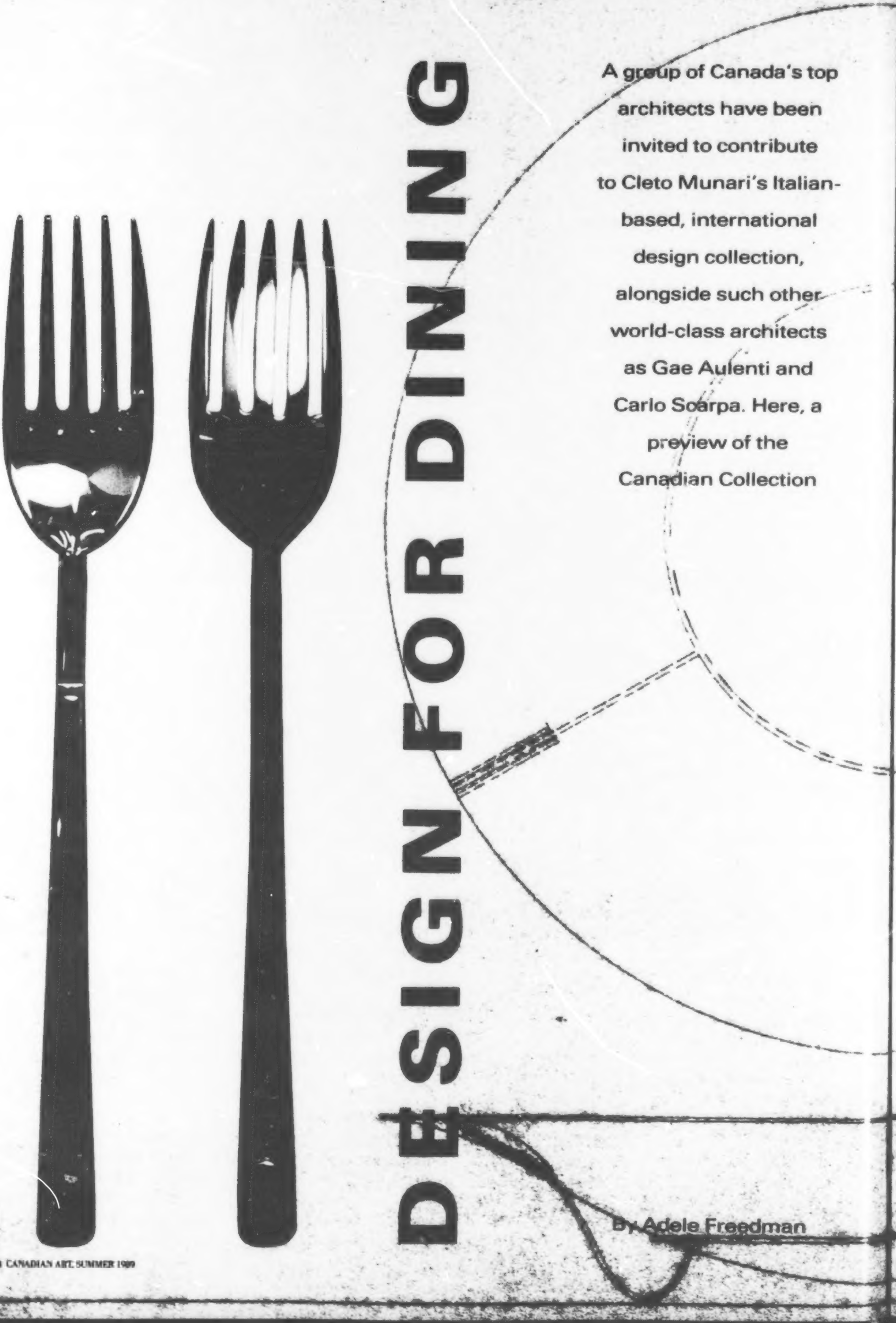
Mars's scripts abound in borrowed quotes and references from sources as disparate as Greek mythology, the Bible, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Freud, Elizabeth I's own poetry, Mae West's unbeatable one-liners and mountains of '60s psychobabble. This liberal borrowing amplifies the characters and provides a cultural subtext, a subversive, humorous climate in which nothing is sacred and no myth or text is so irrefutable that it cannot be scrutinized, toyed with and overturned. In *Pure Nonsense*, for example, after Freud and Jung have performed hypnotic hocus-pocus on Alice and put her into a trance, a projected text reads: "Woman has done for psychoanalysis what the frog has done for biology."

Performance art demands the presence of the artist as performer and indeed Mars is the central character in each work: she plays the lead role and dresses for the part (in costumes designed and made by Elinor Rose Galbraith). But Mars's performances are more than dressing up and her dresses are more than costumes. Mars is both a visual object and a performer. As an object, she is Elizabeth, Mae or Alice, a spectacularized representation that symbolizes who and what women are and how they got that way. As a performer, Mars identifies with and merges with each of her representations. In so doing, she combines her personal concerns as an artist with the politics of representation.

Each of Mars's performances is an inhabitation, a critical and comic feminist narrative about women's power, whether it exists in a kingdom, on a movie set or in Wonderland. By taking a character from history, film and fiction, Mars explores personal and social relations both as products of the social and political imagination and as producers and reflections of it. Mars fits herself into the dresses of women who, in the case of Elizabeth I and Mae West, created themselves and their circumstances, and in the case of Alice, challenged the existing order. For each, there was a price for power: Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen, was denied more earthly pleasures; Mae West was replaced by more maleable cinematic icons who held their tongues; and Alice Liddell was, after all, only the subject of Carroll's imagination and the object of his desire.

In rewriting the histories of her three characters and placing them at the centre of debate, Mars has constructed a trilogy that reads like the origins of the female species.

DESIGN FOR DINING

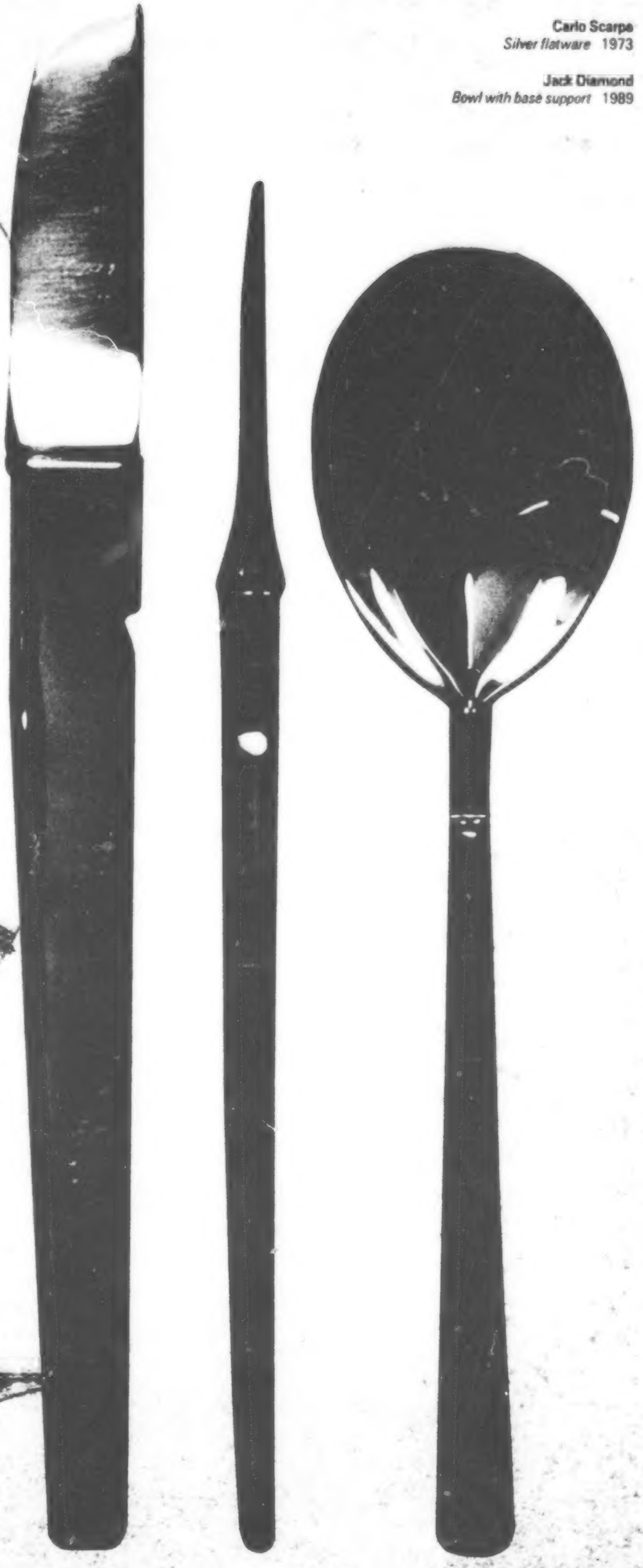


A group of Canada's top architects have been invited to contribute to Cleto Munari's Italian-based, international design collection, alongside such other world-class architects as Gae Aulenti and Carlo Scarpa. Here, a preview of the Canadian Collection

By Adele Freedman

Of the current explosion of plates, tea kettles and espresso pots designed by living architects, Cleto Munari is proud to accept major responsibility. It was in 1972 that Munari — industrialist, charmer, wild card — persuaded famed Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa to design a set of cutlery for production in Vicenza, Munari's home and for centuries a centre of workmanship in gold and silver. *Domus* covered it, museums bought and showed it, and Munari was on his way to becoming the "publisher" of limited editions of argentine artifacts commissioned from such elite auteurs as Gae Aulenti, Hans Hollein, Mario Botta and Ettore Sottsass.

In the mid-'80s, at the urging of his ring-laden, Valentino-dressed wife, Valentina, Munari launched a designer jewellery collection, starring Sottsass and a 24-karat cast of architects privileged to work with gold and gemstones. Next came a signature series of Swiss-made watches by Hollein, Sottsass, Arata Isozaki and Michael Graves, which found their way into the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Along the way, and *molte grazie* to Munari, microcreations by a new international objet-set became a phenomenon special to art galleries and trendy gift shops. So what's new? Thanks to the purposeful intervention of Francesca Valente, director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Toronto, silver by Canadian architects may soon be showing at a museum near you, courtesy of Cleto Munari. V[illegible] an accomplished arm-twister, exhibite[illegible] selection of Munari silver in 1987, [illegible] Cle[illegible] and Valentina



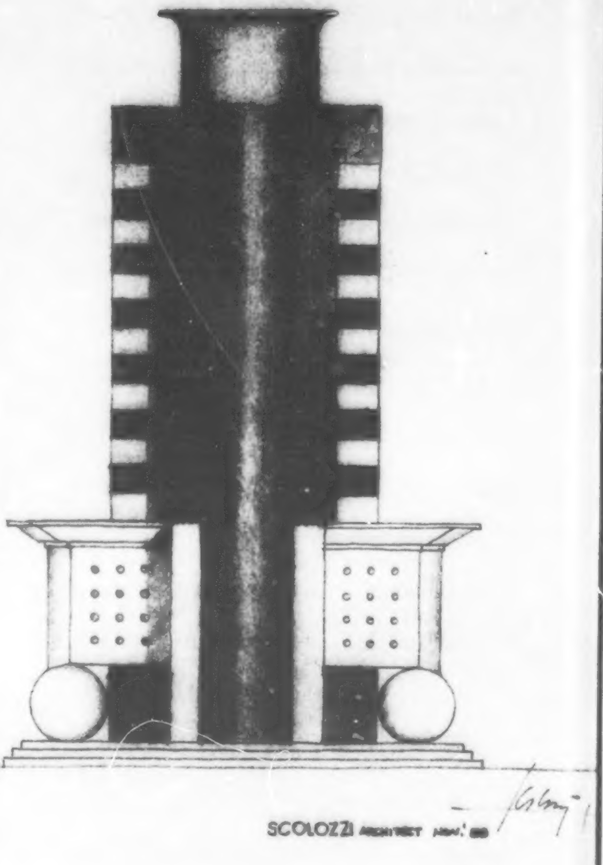
Carlo Scarpa
Silver flatware 1973

Jack Diamond
Bowl with base support 1989

in attendance, as part of her ambitious celebration of Italian culture, "Italy on Stage." Last July, she ran into Munari at the Venice Biennale and, in his words, "issued a challenge": why not include some Canadian architects in the silver collection? Munari agreed to return to Toronto to interview candidates — provided Valente did the legwork. Her list: Jack Diamond, Arthur Erickson, Edward Jones, Aldo and Francesco Piccaluga, Francesco Scolozzi, Eb Zeidler and, posthumously from existing drawings, Ron Thom.

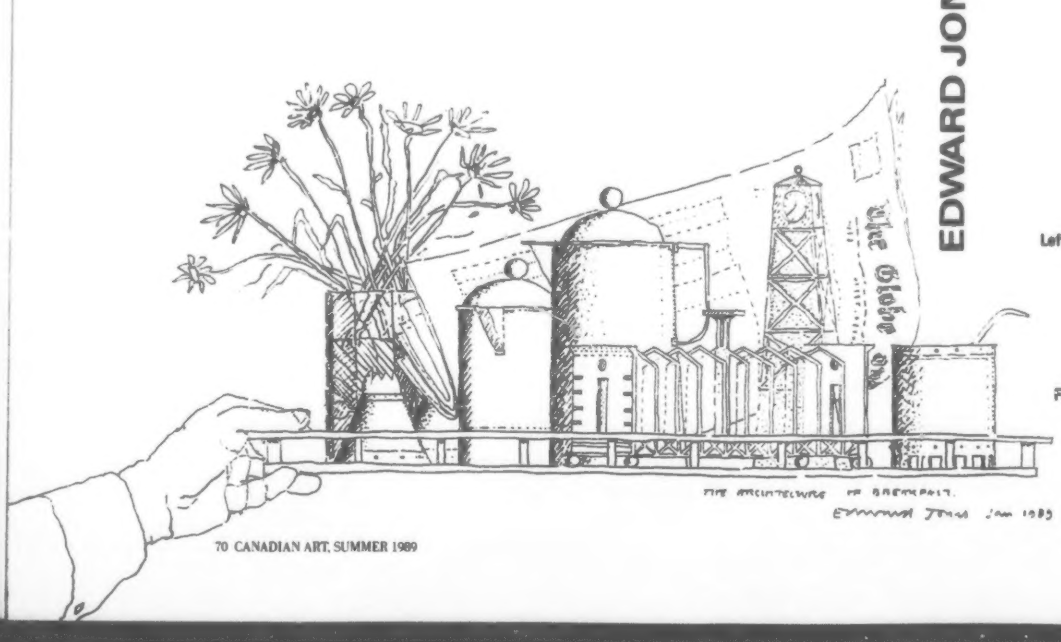
Dolled up in a pink, pride-and-joy cashmere jacket, black cashmere slacks, white shirt and Memphis tie, one wrist encircled by an Isozaki watch, 11 diamonds and a sapphire standing in for numerals, and around the other a diamond-studded bangle designed by Valentina, Munari, who is 58 but who "was doing nothing up to 45," who floats his collections by manufacturing promotional gifts for Italian corporations — Munari, pleased to be photographed, allowing that he is "superficial," sat down over an espresso to discuss

FRANCESCO SCOLOZZI



Francesco Scolozzi
Metavase 1988
Silver, gold-plated silver (base)
Murano handblown glass (vase)
8 in. diameter x 16 in.

EDWARD JONES



Edward Jones
Left: *The Architecture of Breakfast* 1989
Drawing

Near right: *Silver toast rack* 1988
Facade and frame, version one
Silver, brass
8 x 4 in.

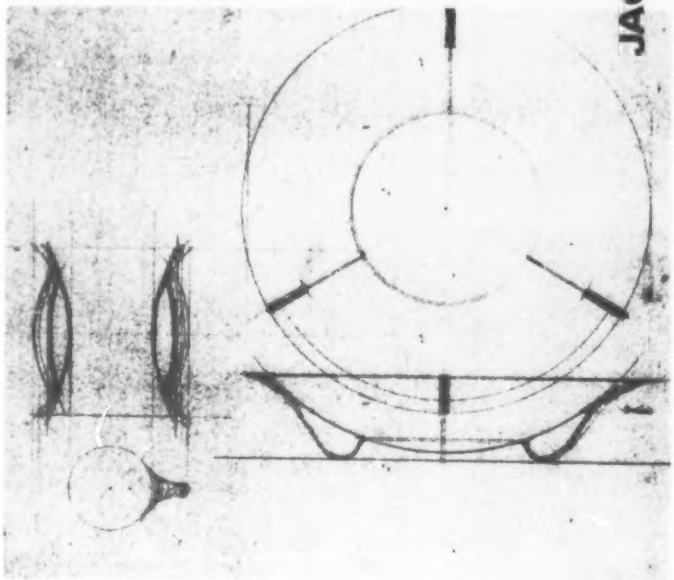
Far right: *Punch bowl with ladle* 1988
Silver, brass, gold
12-14 in. diameter x 7 in.

what Valente is optimistically calling The Canadian Collection. Safe to say, no architect, regardless of citizenship, could rank with his beloved Scarpa, of whom he spoke, dreamy eyes fixed elsewhere, before getting down to business.

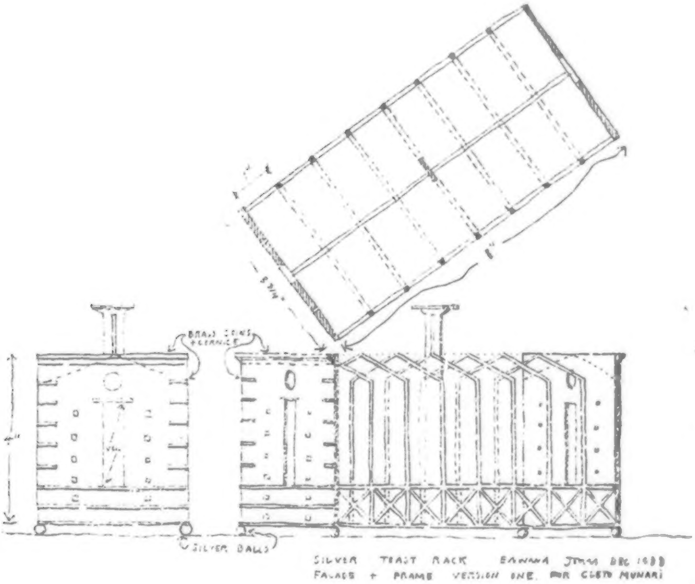
"I became his driver," he said of the maestro, who died in Japan in 1978. "Carlo Scarpa liked very much to drive around; he used to say he loved to look at the countryside, but he no sooner got into the car than he fell asleep. He always carried a metre-square linen handkerchief completely drenched in perfume, so I had to roll down the window. He would wear a jacket with holes in the elbows — but three details he always insisted on: the handkerchief, handmade shoes from Bolivia and hats like film director Mario Soldati used to wear, which he brought in from Cuba."

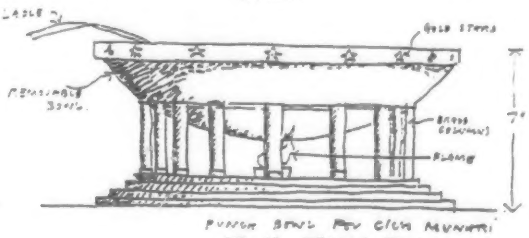
Not even Arthur Erickson, who had known Scarpa, could match that. Munari was, however, impressed by the size of Eb Zeidler's office, and Zeidler himself struck him as "a persona." He found Diamond to be "*un' Ebreo molto sympatico*"; Jones, who made the biggest hit, qualified as "a character." Of the so-called Canadian Collection, which, in sketch form, consists of a bowl (Diamond), candleholders (Erickson), candleholders

JACK DIAMOND

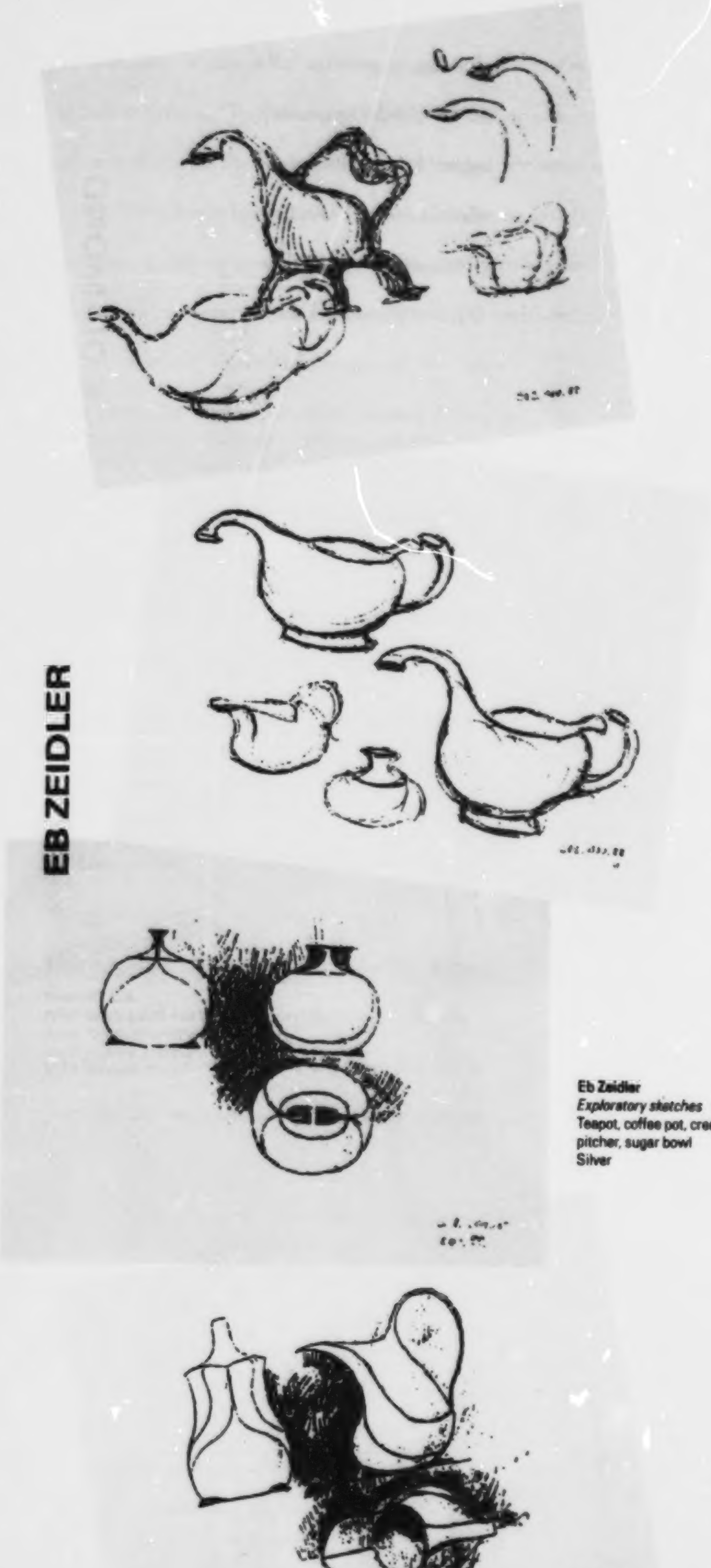


Jack Diamond
Bowl with base support 1989
Polished silver with matte interior (bowl)
Chrome, steel rod (base)
14 in. diameter x 2 in.


8 3/4"
1"
BRASS COINS + CORNICE
4"
SILVER BALLS
SILVER TOAST RACK EDWARD JONES DEC 1988
FACADE + FRAME VERSION ONE FOR CLETO MUNARI


12 - 14"
DIAMETER
LADLE
GOLD STARS
REMOVABLE BOWL
BRASS COLUMNS
FLAME
7"
PUNCH BOWL FOR CLETO MUNARI
DEC 88 EDWARD JONES

EB ZEIDLER

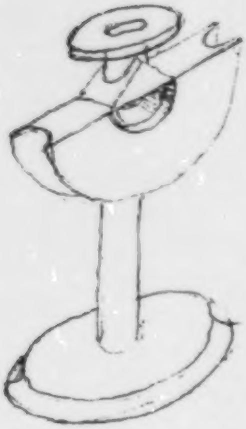


Eb Zeidler
Exploratory sketches 1988
Teapot, coffee pot, cream
pitcher, sugar bowl
Silver

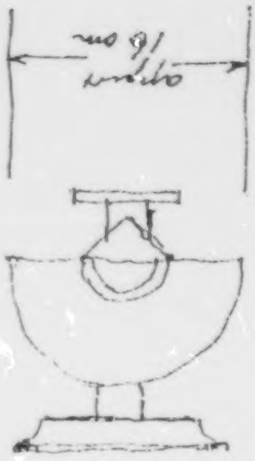
and a vase (Scolozzi), punchbowl and toast rack (Jones), centrepiece (the Piccalugas) and a tea and coffee set (Zeidler), Munari had this to say: "There are no guarantees. If prototypes are made, they go into a catalogue. If they're exhibited and there are orders, they are filled. Otherwise they remain prototypes." That's standard procedure.

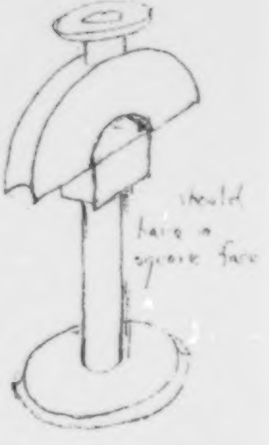
What's in it for the designers? Trust me: more fame than fortune. Munari is convinced an architect can become more renowned for designing small objects than big buildings. "Carlo Scarpa's cutlery," he insists, "became more famous than the five or six important things he did, which is absurd, but understandable. Buildings don't travel — these objects travel. But fine pieces of silver may be more difficult to design than a building. The Canadians all accepted with real enthusiasm. True, they have never designed silver objects before. But there's a saying in Rome: 'If they are roses, they'll bloom.' "

Arthur Erickson
Candleholder 1988
Silver
6 ¾ x 8 or 16 in.

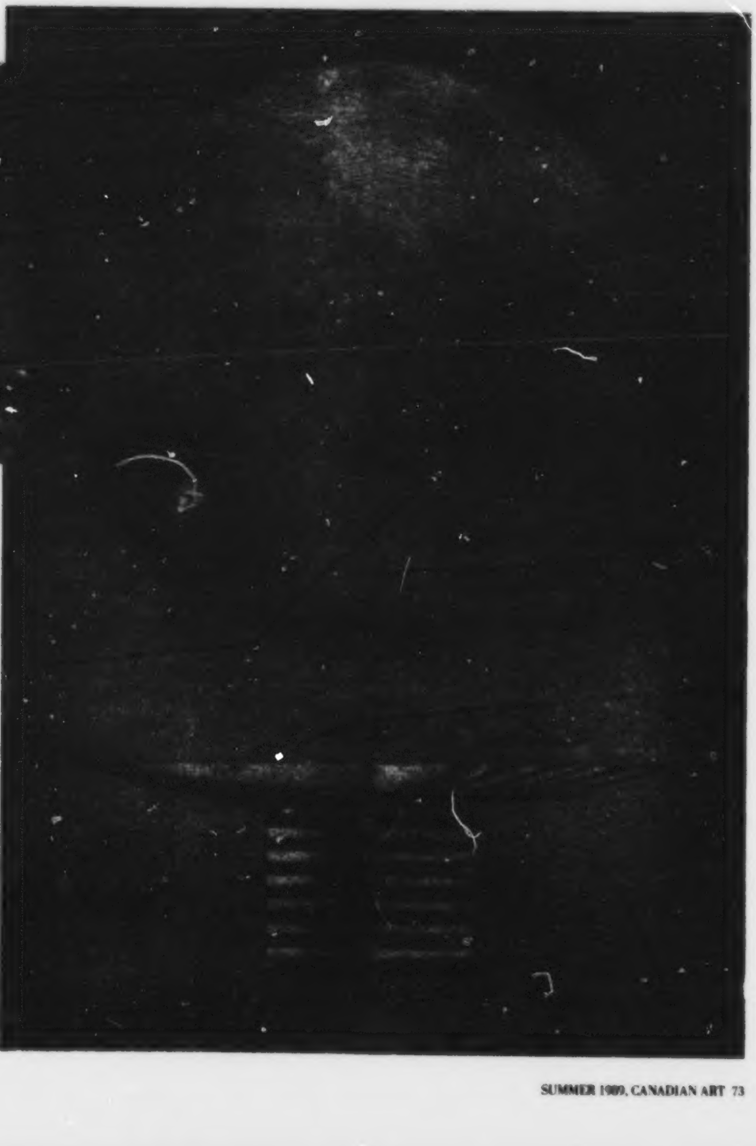


ARTHUR ERICKSON





A CO PICCALUGA



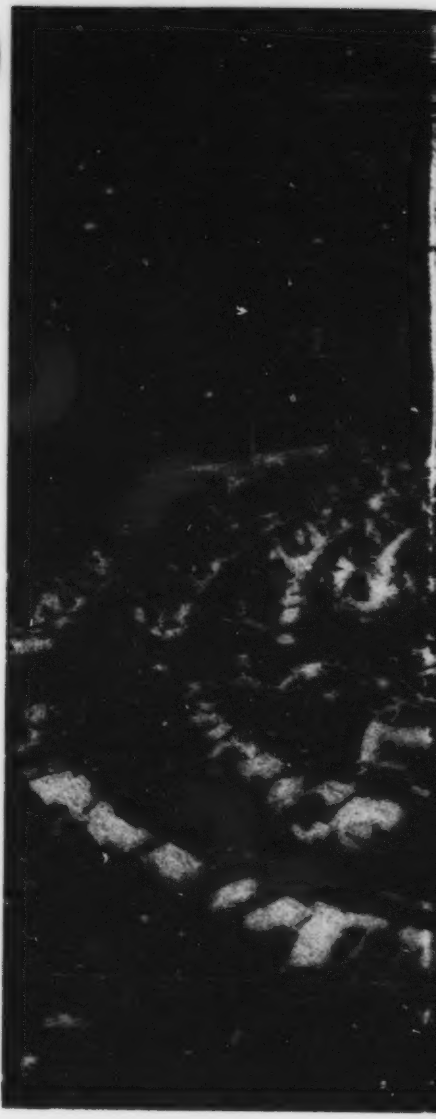
Aldo and Francesco Piccaluga
Above: *Candy box with lid* 1988
Silver, layered marble
8 in. diameter x 5 in.
Flower vase 1988
Silver, glass, layered marble
5 in. diameter x 11 in.
Candleholder 1988
Silver, layered marble
2 in. diameter x 5 ½ in.

Right: *Centrepiece* 1988
Silver, layered marble
19 ¾ in. diameter x 6 ¾ in.

GROUND ZERO

Over the last four years, the work of Vancouver painter Derek Root has modulated from a West Coast, romantic vision of paradise lost to a more detached, urban, almost bloodless depiction of the anxious architecture of raw power

By Doug Coupland

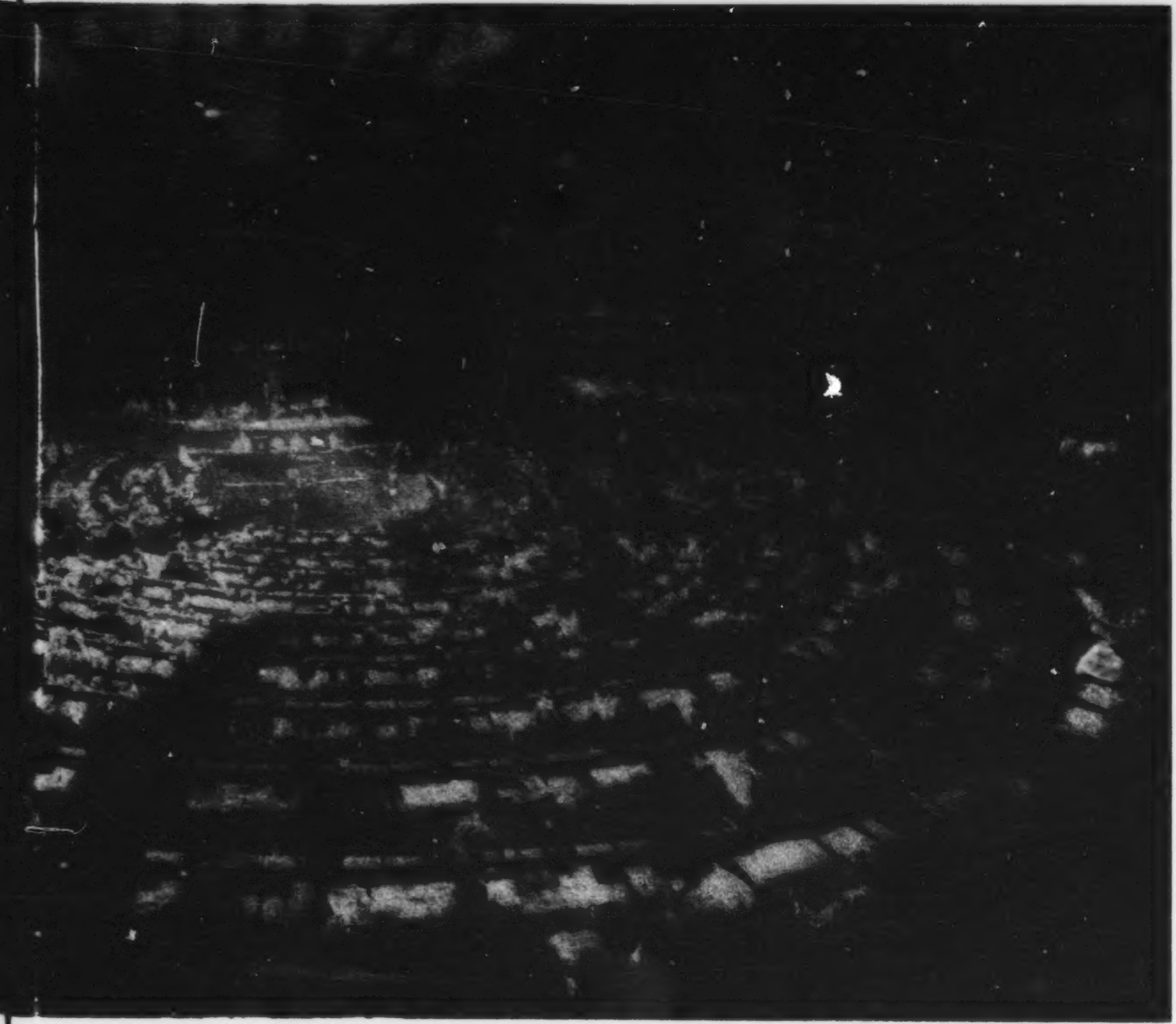


Derek Root lives three blocks away from New York City's Trump Tower — possibly *the* definitive icon of power-gone-kookoo in this decade. There is irony in this placement, for Vancouverite Root is a painter whose recent works deal with the essence of power in our time: its choreography, its presence, its architecture — its excesses. Now 28, Root was awarded the Canada Council's PS1 studio in Queens last September. He may live downtown, but he works in a neighborhood that can be described, Joan Didion-like, as one of senseless killing.

Conceptual artist Ken Lum calls Root one of the best painters in Canada. But wait a second...*painting?* In 1989? To go back a bit, British Columbia born and bred Root is one of Vancouver's eight "romantic" painters (most of them now cringe at the term) who were elevated to a Rose's Lime Juice ad-style stardom in a 1985 Vancouver Art Gallery exhibition, *Young Romantics*. Root, then a recent graduate of the Emily Carr College of Art and Design, was the group's innocent. His works in particular gave viewers a youthful, intuitive insight into an idyllic B.C. world entering the late 20th century: in his paintings, trees older than the Magna Carta were snapped by waves and bashed against walls by forces both unnamed and unseen. Even paradise, it seemed, was getting reamed by the angst era.

Four years later, the role of the innocent has been dropped. Derek Root has undergone some pretty major changes, as has his work. This was very much in evidence at New York's 49th Parallel Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art in March, where his work was part of a group show that included peers (and fellow romantics) Graham Gillmore and Angela Grossmann. In person, Root now affects the stance of the quintessential urban hipster. He carries off drop-dead detachment to the point where even poseur supreme David Bowie was piqued by the Root persona and started an argument recently at Nell's nightclub ("Hey — are you in a British rock band or something?" was the triggering comment).

A pose of detachment has invaded Root's art, too. He no longer paints doormats; he paints bullies instead. Gone are the naïve, environmentally victimized thrashings of 1985. Replacing them are translucent architectural images of power places that resemble such influence-brokering arenas as the United Nations and bland, boring Politburo headquarters in International Style halls. These he paints with a bloodless precision (he uses a projector) that would have seemed unimaginable



Voice and Monuments 1989
Acrylic on canvas
156 ½ x 95 ½ in.
Photo: Eric Weeks

Photo of Derek Root
by L.L. Harding-Root

four years ago. Any imagery that might betray feeling has been tranquillized by architectonica.

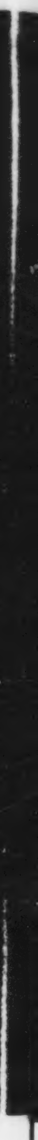
Does this mean Derek Root doesn't *feel* anything anymore? That he is just one more 1980s victim who treats each day like a coping experience, masking fear with mathematics and rhetorical imagery? Fortunately, no. His painting technique betrays the calculated alienation of fascist-looking ritualistic spaces. Look up close, right on the surface, and you'll see that his style remains lush and still bears the hallmark romantic, tubercular accretions of tar and muck. *Something is still there*. On the paintings' scabby, poxed skins we see the emotions of yore not only existing but multiplying and mutating (into anxiety and worry, mind you, but emotions nonetheless).

His fields of color expose lesion-like sores of off-tints and mis-hues. Studying his ghost meetings, spoken in ghost languages inside ghost buildings, leads to one conclusion in particular: maybe the only structure that is really going on here is *raw power itself*...and it kind of feels like it's being abused.

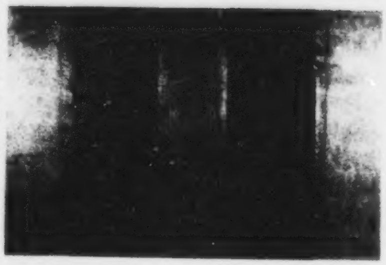
Okay, we already know that power gets abused. But Root remains one of the few artists in the country whose future works might actually define *prescriptions* for current power malaises.

TIME

In questioning the validity of authoritative

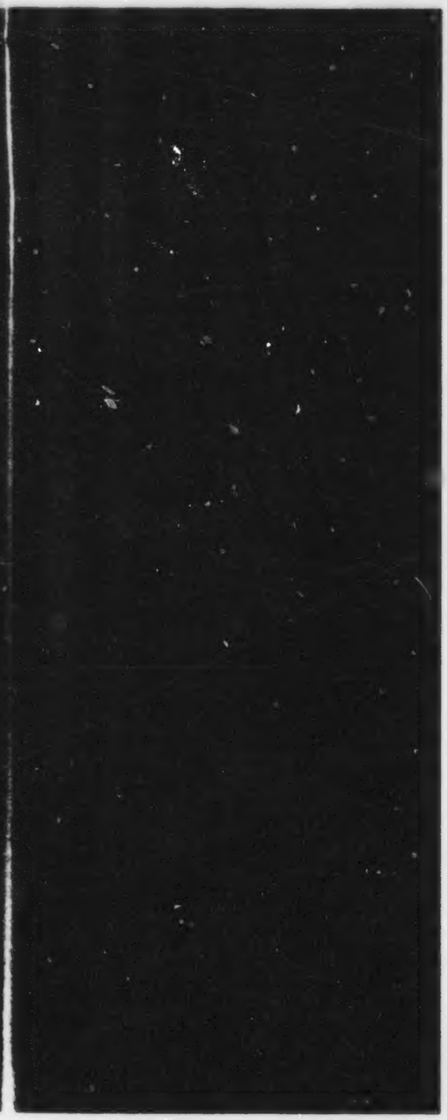


Above: *Display (Temptation To Follow)* (detail) 1986
Mixed media, 10 x 35 x 6 ft.
Collection: Univ. of Lethbridge
Photo: Peter MacCallum
Left: *Untitled #1* 1988
Mixed media, 40 x 60 in.
Right: *Untitled #3* 1988
Mixed media, 40 x 60 in.
Far right: *Untitled #2* 1988
Mixed media, 40 X 60 in.
Collection: McCarthy & McCarthy
Images courtesy S.L. Simpson



AFTER TIME-HONORED

images, Renée Van Halm has moved her art from personal image-making to public discourse



These are tough times for the old-fashioned business of making painting and sculpture. Gloomy philosophical questions hang heavily in the air, afflicting the culturally impressionable with a paralyzing sense of the futility of it all. How to create aesthetic objects that can't be co-opted by the system one is intending to criticize? How to create anything real when the very notion of authenticity has been so widely discredited? How to be original in an era of mass reproduction? How to be true to one's inner vision without running afoul of one ideological dictate or another, to be both spontaneous and politically correct at the same time?

Something of the dead-end nature of this debate can be glimpsed in the recent work of Toronto artist Renée Van Halm. For the past decade, Van Halm has been producing bold, engaging, large-scale installations that combine painting and sculpture in a manner that often resembles theatrical sets. In her work from the early 1980s, she translated the interiors of early Renaissance paintings into three-dimensional settings for intimate psychological dramas. Then she shifted her focus to the urban landscape, finding in its empty shopping malls and oppressive glass towers metaphors for the powerlessness of modern life.

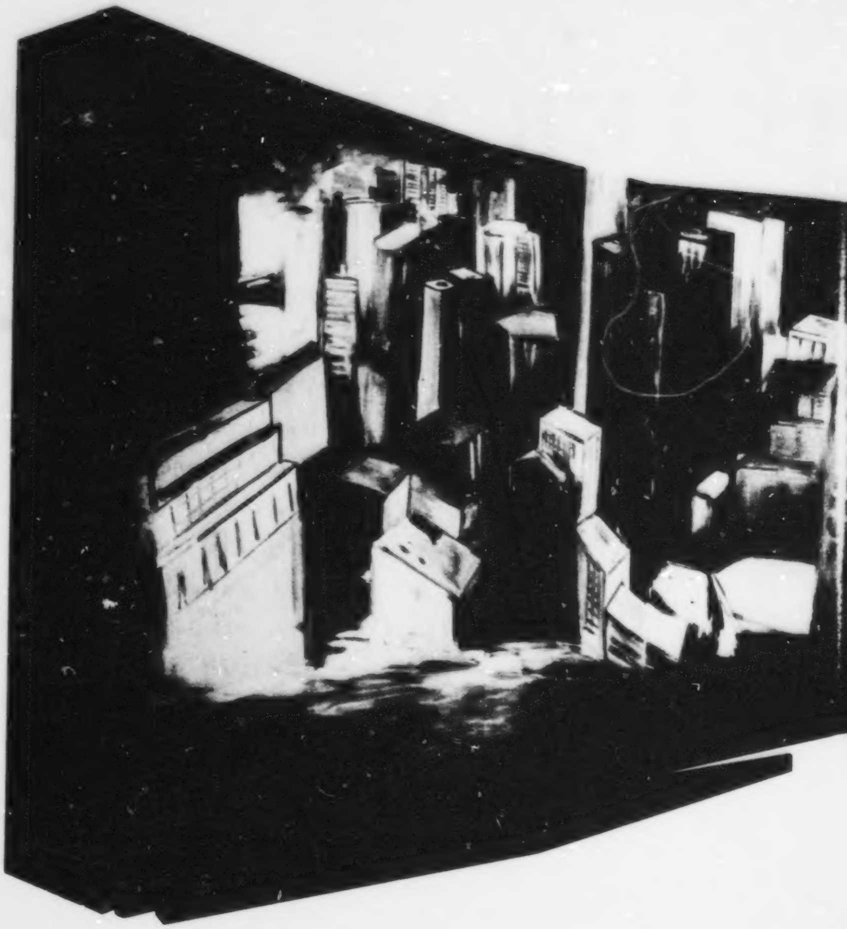
Lately, the artist has changed direction once again, zooming into the no-man's land of cultural relativity. Whereas Van Halm's early echoing of quattrocento suggested the potential for transcendent experience, recent large-scale works such as *Material Value* (1987-88) and *Recreation* (1987) offer no such solace. Instead of the inviting embrace of those cloistered interiors, we encounter stark, wall-like expanses of paint, metal or prefabricated materials, upon which are mounted small painted panels. The paintings refer to sources as varied as a drawing by Poussin, 15th-century Japanese calligraphy, a 20th-century motel brochure and a painting by Jack Bush. On Van Halm's walls, images which in their original context connoted value are reduced to interchangeable objects, art history become fodder for the junk heap of mass

By Gillian MacKay

culture. Van Halm has written in a recent statement: "This work once again places into question the authority of the original images and instills in the viewer a sense of longing for either the value of wholeness or originality."

It is indeed a dramatic transition, and one that seems to have taken the artist herself by surprise. "I don't deliberately come at it from a cynical point of view," says Van Halm, an open, personable woman whose desire to make herself understood occasionally conflicts with a reluctance to "overintellectualize." "My best work has always come from a more intuitive response to life and the world around me," she explains. As an active member of Toronto's artistic community, represented by the conceptually oriented S.L. Simpson Gallery, she is sensitive to current trends in critical thinking. And having achieved prominence relatively early in her career, it is inevitable that she, at 39, would be questioning what success is all about. "Her work is not generally conceptual. It is very personal," says her dealer Sandy Simpson. Of the recent work, she says: "It is not about Renée trying to understand Jack Bush. It is more about Renée trying to understand what her place will be 25 years down the road."

Van Halm, whose works can be found in prominent corporate collections, the National Gallery and the Art Gallery of Ontario, might well wonder. A few years ago, she was walking through the Macdonald Block at Queen's Park and spied a Jack Bush painting on a barren stone wall. "It got me thinking about how art dates, and about the careerism that went into promoting someone like Bush," she recalls. "I started questioning the value and belief systems of what we accept as meaningful. That painting *was* meaningful in the '60s and now we say, Oh God, not another Jack Bush." Van Halm copied Bush's 1965 painting *Hard Red* and made it the centrepiece of her 1988 installation, *Recreation*. The move drew flak, both from critics who felt that Bush was a banal "bank artist" to begin with and from those who revered him. The controversy illustrates the difficulties she has encountered moving from the realm of private expression to that of public commentary. "I'm going through a difficult period," she

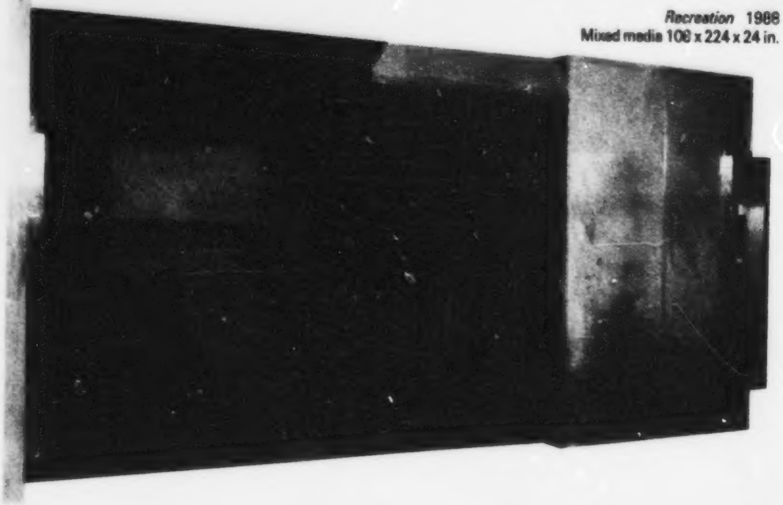


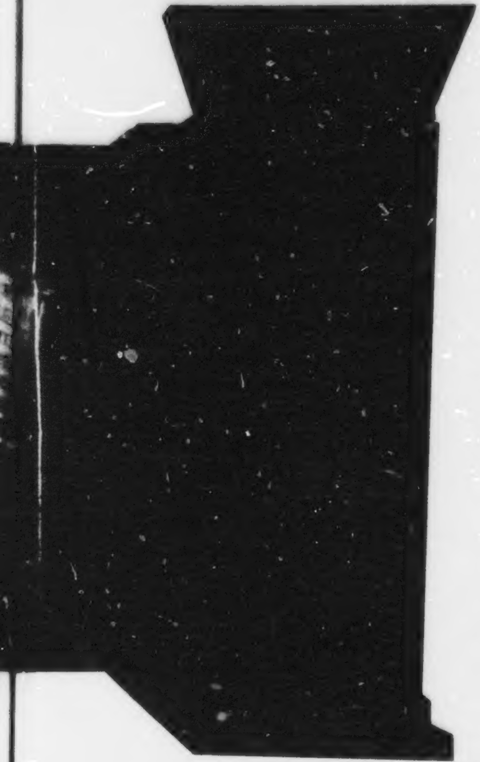
Clockwise from top
Unattainable Immediacy: Only So Close Part I 1985
Wood, cloth, oil paint, plaster, 108 x 177 x 22 in.
Collection: Canada Council Art Bank

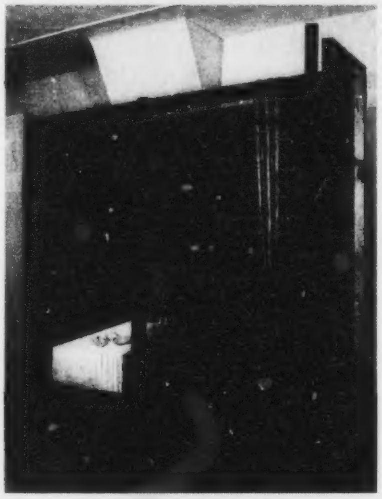
Upon Awakening She Becomes Aware 1983
Painted wood, 96 x 127 x 79 in.
Collection: Art Gallery of Ontario

Anticipating the Eventual Emergence of Form Part I 1983
Painted wood, 96 x 114 x 24 in.
Collection: National Gallery of Canada

Recreation 1988
Mixed media 108 x 224 x 24 in.







admits over lunch at the Rivoli restaurant on Toronto's Queen Street. "This recent work is very much at the beginning stages, and I'm still wrestling with how these ideas can be developed."

In many respects, life was simpler a decade ago when Van Halm first began her oversized explorations of what she has described as the "transitional zone" between painting and sculpture. Her basic training at the School of Art in Vancouver, where she grew up, had been in printmaking, but postgraduate work at Concordia University in Montreal under such teachers as Guido Molinari and Irene Whittome had exposed her to more radical ideas. In 1978, she moved to Toronto to live with actor Tom Butler, helped found and run the alternate gallery Mercer Union, started teaching at York University and gave birth to a daughter, Amelia, all within a year.

It was an extraordinarily fertile period for the development of her art as well. Inspired by the early Renaissance masters such as Fra Angelico, Piero della Francesca and Giotto whom she had studied on a 1979 trip to Italy, Van Halm began to create large architectural structures loosely based on their work. Deeply moved by her own experience of motherhood, Van Halm was particularly drawn to visitation and annunciation scenes from the life of Mary. At first the installations were spare and formal, but gradually she introduced lush, figurative painting in rich Renaissance tones of crimson, gold, azure and green. "It went against the anti-sensual dictates of the time. But I felt jaded by all that rigor, steel bars on the floor, that sort of thing," she says. "Still, the idea that my work is too pretty has hurt me critically."

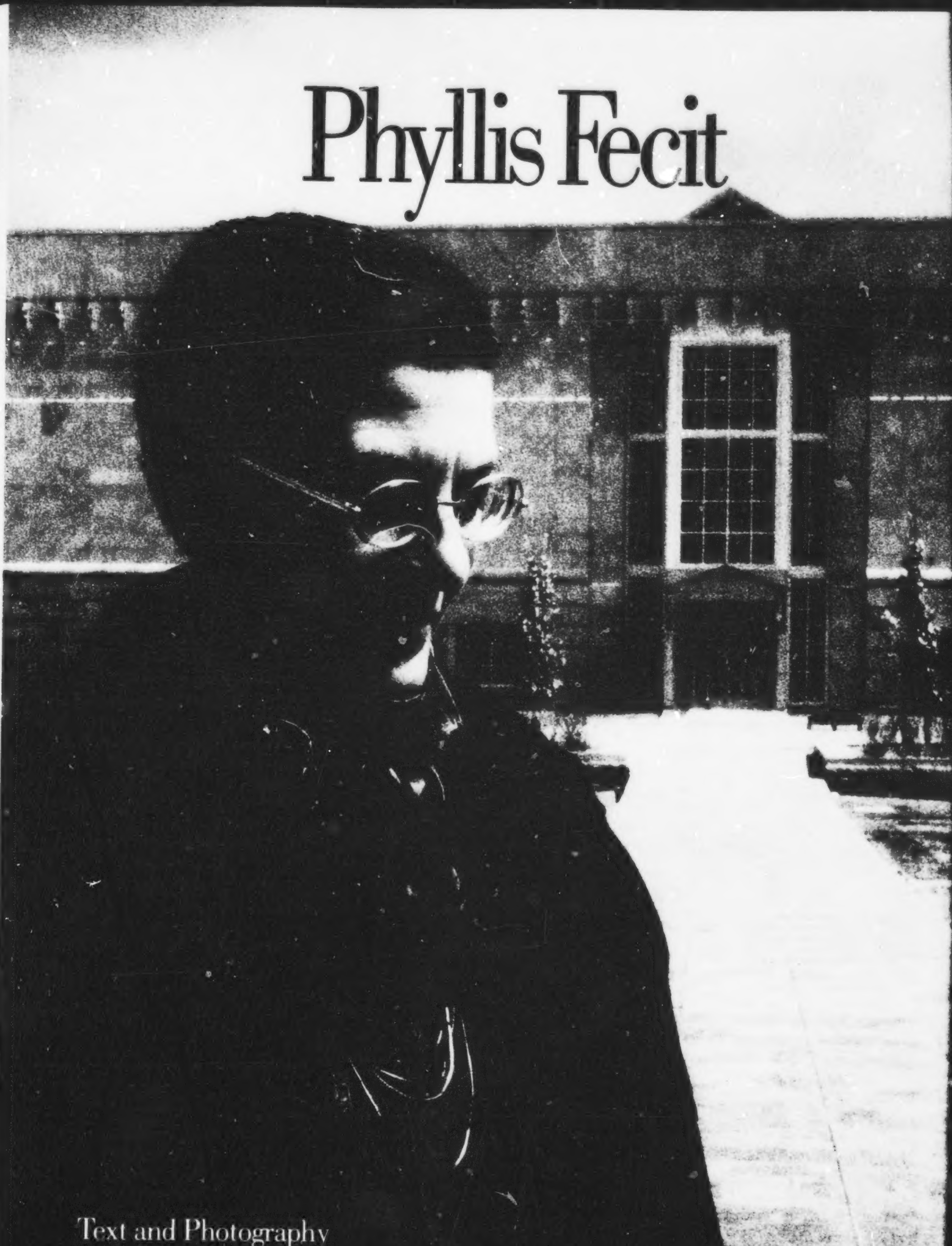
There is no denying the beauty of her best work from that period. In *Anticipating the Eventual Emergence of Form* (1983), based on a Piero della Francesca painting of the pregnant Madonna, small hands part a set of curtains to reveal an empty stage bathed in a radiant light. Gone are the original Madonna and angels, but the mystical mood of anticipation remains. The arches, curtains and doorways, which once marked the transition from profane to sacred worlds, now signal a shift from the everyday to the heightened consciousness of the life of the imagination.

The middle years of the decade were, for the artist, "a dark period emotionally," and her mood reflected itself in her work. Turning her attention to the Toronto urban landscape, Van Halm captured the empty, dehumanizing side of the booming metropolis. In works such as *Unattainable Immediacy: Only So Close Part I* (1985), a cluster of office towers looms menacingly over blood-red water, a blackened sky above portending disaster. So potent was the social commentary that it tended to obscure the conceptual and formal elements in the work, a state of affairs that bothered Van Halm. "Someone wrote that semiologists would roll over in their graves if they saw it," she said. As well, she was finding it depressing. "I thought, boy, I need to do something a little more lighthearted. My soul is getting twisted."

The emotionally neutral zone of art commenting on art seemed to point a way out of the gloom. In 1986, Van Halm produced a piece for the Toronto Sculpture Garden entitled *Display (Temptation To Follow)*. Composed of fragmented images and materials, from aluminum sheeting to curtains covered in gold leaf, it comments on the ways in which the modern city influences desire through the manipulation of imagery. Subsequent works, such as *Material Value*, are even more austere, using tacky interior building materials such as "Hacienda Stucco" panelling as deflating, ironic backdrops to "high art." "I have been trying to get away from the seductive quality of painted surfaces for a while, even though everyone seems to miss it," she says ruefully.

The artist herself seems to miss it as well. Inspired by a photograph in this magazine of herself drinking tea in her studio, which struck her as an absurdly romantic posture, and the 1960 book *The Artist in His Studio* by Alexander Liberman, Van Halm is currently working on a series of drawings on the theme of the artist at work. Perhaps these more sensuous, intuitively based works will offer a way out of the anti-art corner into which she has been painting herself. With her prodigious imagination and keen sense of adventure, there is no telling where she will go next. "The fun of making art," she says, "is not knowing where it will take you."

Phyllis Fecit



Text and Photography
by Geoffrey James

Phyllis Lambert's new Canadian Centre for Architecture is a triumph of the will

In her early 60s, with a sense of conviction that is almost palpable, Montreal architect Phyllis Lambert is about to disprove forever the famous dictum of poet Frank Scott that Canadians are a people who never do by halves what they can do by quarters. Whereas most people in her tax bracket might show their interest in culture by endowing a university chair or perhaps even building a new museum wing, Lambert has created a major new institution that is both ambitious in scope and quite unlike anything else in the world. Montreal's Canadian Centre for Architecture, aborning for some 15 years now, is dedicated to nothing less than the scholarly investigation of the world's built environment, both past and present. It has a staff of around 100, an architectural library that is already in the world's top three (with 130,000 volumes) and a collection of 45,000 photographs and 20,000 drawings. And, on May 7, it opened the doors of its startlingly beautiful new home.

The historic core of the Centre is the Shaughnessy House, a 19th-century, grey stone, robber baron mansion between Baile Street and the recently renamed René-Lévesque Boulevard. Lambert bought the house in 1974 to save it from the wrecker's ball; part of the interior has been immaculately restored to house such facilities as a tearoom and bar for public functions, while elsewhere a clean modernism prevails. Horseshoeing around the Shaughnessy House is Montreal architect Peter Rose's new CCA. Its austere, pearly-toned exterior has an almost 18th-century French feeling to it — a feeling that is teasingly offset by high-tech aluminum cornices.

The inside of the CCA is a rich, tactile experience, a succession of handsome, intimate public spaces put together by someone with a sumptuary's eye for detail. The floors are dark granite and, in the auditorium, library and entrance hall, a fine-grained maple wall mimics stone. The main CCA galleries are barrel-vaulted with a gentle, louvred light from above. They house, for the opening exhibition (on until August 7), *Architecture and Its Image*, a complex meditation on the relationship between the built environment and its representation, with material ranging from the early 15th century to the present day, from maps, books and journals to videotapes and computer graphics, all drawn from the impeccably stored collections of the CCA.

To the lay press, the progenitor of the CCA is a source of wonder. Journalists tend to dwell on what they perceive as her eccentricities — she is usually accompanied by a bouvier named Bogart, sleeps on a mattress on the floor of her Old Montreal loft and favors functional overalls that recall Churchill's wartime gear. But then the lay press often tends to confuse distinction and eccentricity. (Anyone reading local obituaries of the late Glenn Gould could easily have got the impression that his real achievements were his phone bill and his war on the common cold.) What is often overlooked is the insatiably curious nature of Phyllis Lambert's mind. She appears much more at ease discussing the architectural ecology of Dorchester Square than, say, how much she has personally put into the CCA. (Contributions from the two senior levels of the government amount to $8 million toward construction. The bill for the building is, according to some insiders, upward of $60 million. But as it nears completion, the CCA itself appears to be increasingly enblematic of its creator — with its wide view of architecture and with a building that betrays a greed for perfection. As a decade of frantic work nears fruition, Lambert denies herself any easy satisfaction. Asked what her emotions were on contemplating the opening, she said "I'm anxious. I have lectures to prepare, I'm not happy with the gallery lighting. We're not home yet." A motto, in fact, for someone who never does anything by halves.

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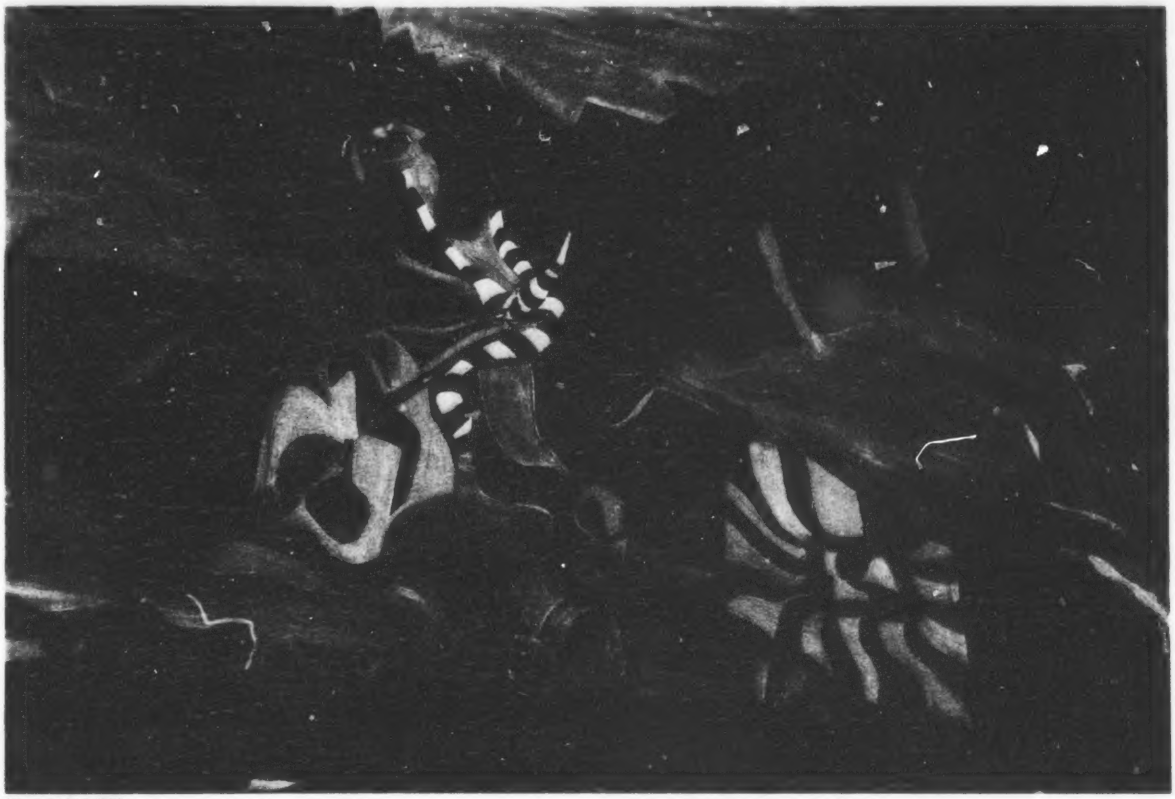
FOCUS

ON *JACK SHADBOLT*



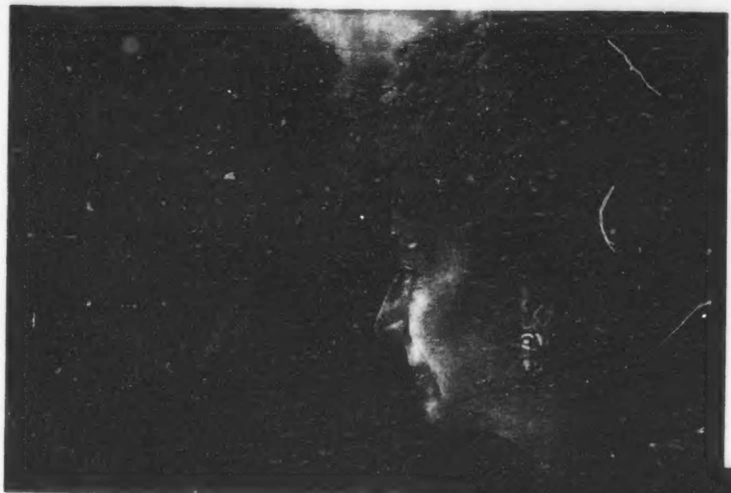
Westward Drift 1988
acrylic on canvas
49 x 72 in.

Jack Shadbolt has been British Columbia's premier image-maker since Emily Carr died in 1945. His subjects have included butterflies, owls, flags, the view between Greek columns, the West Coast forest, weather-silvered driftwood and native Indian masks. Each of his themes has emerged without the self-conscious intellectualizing of the artist, been developed to the point where its possibilities have become exhausted, and then set aside. Many of them have dealt with gestation, the cycle of nature or the reality of myth. All totter between landscape and abstraction, between the seen and the imagined.

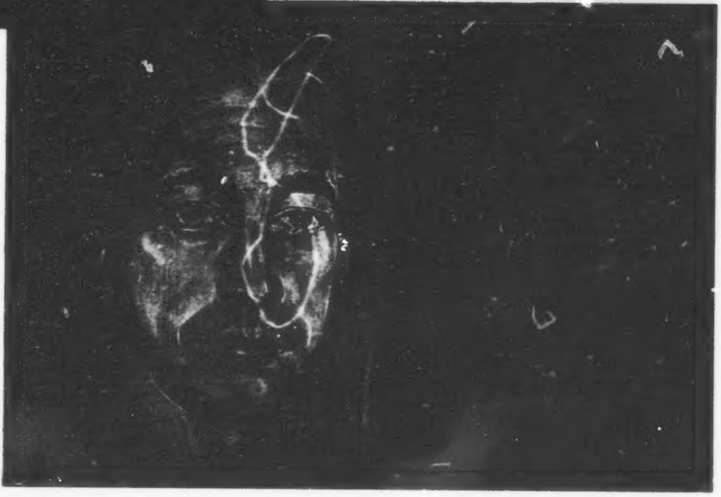
But over the past year Shadbolt has changed direction. Rather than moving forward to introduce a new image or a different theme, he has looked back. Is this recycling of old ideas the artist's response to the referential nature of the postmodernist genre? Did this remarkable series of paintings arise as a result of his choosing illustrations for a monograph that is to explore the long development of his work? Or is there some deeper, more profoundly philosophical reason?

Whatever the impetus, Shadbolt is now drawing upon his own repertoire. High-keyed multi-colored diagonal stripes reminiscent of his *Northern Emblem Series* (1967), ovoids borrowed from his *Fetish Series* (1971) and, something that is new, black and yellow Japanese flags decorate the wings of a sensuously expressionistic butterfly in *Westward Drift* (1989). Set against a surrealist landscape, the central image continues the dialogue between nature and abstraction, the organic and the geometric, and movement and stasis that has always informed the artist's work. *Westward Drift* and the other canvases are an eclectic tour de force. *Maria Tippett*

FOCUS ON *ALLAN HARDING MACKAY*



Some Critical Countenances 1986-88
Detail of Jared Sable, Mira Godard
chalk pastel, oil on industrial
packing paper, 545 x 5 ft.



Some Critical Countenances 1986-88
Detail of David Craven,
Jeffrey Spalding

Allan Harding MacKay's oversize exhibition *Some Critical Countenances: An Extended Drawing* was shown at Halifax's new Art Gallery of Nova Scotia this spring. As a schoolboy growing up in Charlottetown, P.E.I., MacKay drew on whatever he could find — cardboard, book covers, the manila paper in art class, and this new work consisted of a series of chalk pastel and oil portraits executed on some 545 feet of five-foot-wide brown industrial packing paper. The subjects are all players in the Canadian visual arts world, a world in which MacKay himself has been a curator, arts administrator, installation artist and painter.

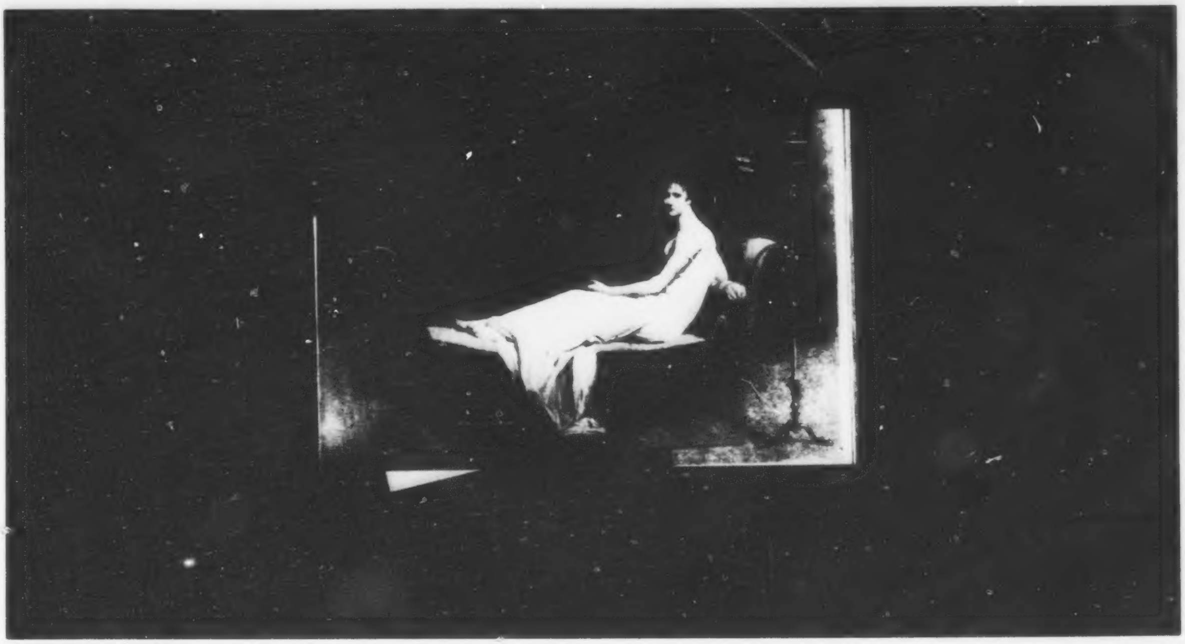
There's a compelling contradiction to MacKay, respected for four years as the director-curator of Saskatoon's Mendel Art Gallery until he left in 1983 to paint in Switzerland for five years, where he painted mountains and portraits, notably a series of "self portraits" incorporating his own image with that of 19th-century Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler. "The pun," says MacKay, "was to get in the picture with a master painter." He returned to head up Toronto's Art Metropole for a year until appointed director-curator of Harbourfront's Power Plant this spring.

For an artist so drawn to tradition and the ways in which he finds himself within it, the choice of materials in the AGNS and other shows seems rash. "It's a decision I made from a professional duality," he says. "When you're a working artist you have another sense of your materials and their necessity. I'm more interested in certain ingredients and forces that happen to the work to enhance its viewed aesthetic but don't enhance its longevity." MacKay is alert to what he calls that "edge of the conservational mentality which can override artistic and curatorial decisions." He talks about "natural attrition. Some things should last; the experience of others may be sufficient to the moment."

Some Critical Countenances, conceived in collaboration with Halifax-based writer and curator Charlotte Townsend-Gault, wrapped its informal portraits of Canadian curators, painters, dealers and critics (and even former communications minister Flora MacDonald) around the AGNS walls. There was no authorial comment, although (typical of MacKay's work) the drawing comments on itself. Text over Max Walters, for example, "tells" David Alexander, "Dave, tell Joan [Stebbins] her glasses are crooked." A balding version of MacKay himself is also included, echoing his 1985 *Double Self-Portrait*.

Just down the road from the AGNS is the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, where MacKay, as one of its most likely-to-succeed alumni, headed up the college's Anna Leonowens Gallery in its earliest days. Some of NSCAD's best and best-known talking heads are in his picture, for as long, that is, as the picture lasts. *Dawn Rae Downton*

FOCUS ON *SOREL COHEN*



re-reading two empires 1989
Black and white and color photos
51 x 140 in. installed

Images of the body in motion appear frequently in the work of Montreal photographer Sorel Cohen. In her series *After Bacon/Muybridge* (1980), she photographed eroticized nude male wrestlers in the style of 19th-century photographer Eadweard Muybridge. In her early feminist work, *The Shape of a Gesture* (1978) and *Le Rite Matinal* (1977), both photo series, Cohen presented herself in the roles of artist, mother and housewife to give expression to the movement of the female body in its daily tasks and concurrent role changes.

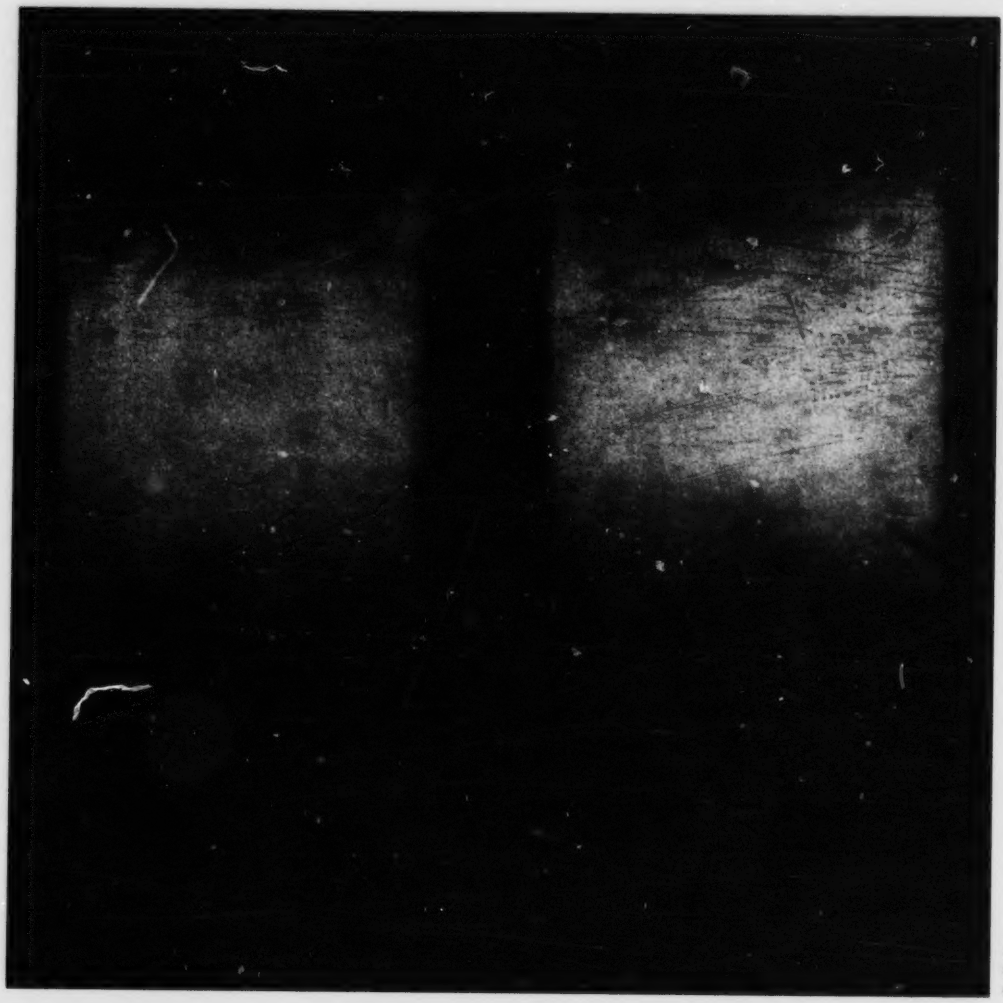
These concerns — motion and female roles — continued in Cohen's *An Extended and Continuous Metaphor* (1983-86), a large-format photo series for which she simultaneously posed as model, painter and photographer. By positioning and repositioning herself in the work, Cohen examined the discursive intersections of the female body, art history and the viewer's gaze, questioning not only the representation of the female body in artistic production but also the role of photography in the history of art.

In her more recent series *Beyond Recovery* (1988), Cohen is no longer in the picture and in fact appears to have abandoned her earlier interests. Instead of imaging herself, she has borrowed reproductions from heterogeneous, almost arbitrary sources: historic documentary photos, travel brochures, art reproductions, calendars and nature books. The individual images are paired and their color, focus and scale manipulated so that the conjunction is invested with an internal logic. The coupled images with their shiny black texts are bordered with black photographic frames.

In *PERDU* (1988), for example, the grey, impressionistic façade of a cathedral is juxtaposed with a sky-blue, generic image of a palm-lined beach. By placing a location for worship alongside a site of leisure activity, Cohen reconciles them as pilgrimage sites for tourists. At the same time, she invokes a nostalgia for old Europe and its colonial outposts. These exhausted-looking reproductions with their bruised coloration display the death of their own exoticism, the artist's concerns parallelling Baudrillard's definition of loss: a loss of authenticity, a loss of nature and a loss of truth.

Cohen's latest work, however, returns to the body, reinstating it as a site of power and possible change. In the photo installation *re-reading two empires* (1989), a reproduction of Jacques-Louis David's portrait of the reclining *Madame Recamier* is positioned between two small, oval, portrait-like photos of Chinese women's feet deformed by years of foot binding. Pairing the epitome of 18th-century French beauty with the disfigured feet, disturbing to Western eyes yet representing feminine allure in pre-revolutionary China, graphically discloses how aesthetic paradigms are culturally determined. The still, posed body is forced into movement through its relation to cultures outside the Western experience. *Kitty Scott*

FOCUS ON *GREG MURDOCK*



Progress 1988
mixed media on panel
48 x 48 in.

Greg Murdock's art is one of contradictions: absolute craftsmanship in the employ of ambiguous imagery; two-dimensional preoccupation with three-dimensional constructions; hard-edge graphite forms abutting chalky, Turneresque atmospheres; and a combinative optimism that reads as apocalyptic — the end of civilization.

Early in his career, Murdock discovered that isolating architectural images within wide, unpopulated and anonymous landscapes charges them with mystery and foreboding. He also discovered a way of working (building up a Spackle surface on board, sanding and incising it, and bonding it with pigments and graphite) that bestows an almost iconic quality upon his art. His paintings are so masterly and accomplished that they become as ancient, still and enigmatic as the forms they depict.

Many of Murdock's references are to early Renaissance painting, from which he abstracts geometric and volumetric elements as well as techniques. Working with wet or dry plaster and applying burnished graphite as his Renaissance precursors applied gilding are, for Murdock, symbolic and meditative acts. Unmeditative process, though, is evident in the industrial angles, images and energies that invade his work from the dockyards beyond his studio.

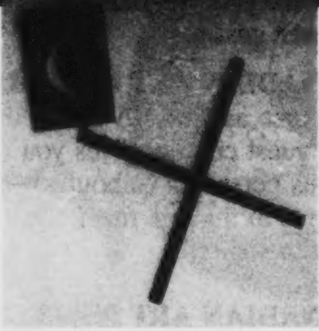
Murdock's shifting scale contributes to his work's ambiguity: what may have begun as a still life with candlesticks evolves into a landscape with immense flares blazing against the tractless night. Murdock's style and technique are idiosyncratic and obsessive — his is a kind of techno-pluralist-neo-classicism.

His vision, a combination of classical elements (columns, stepped platforms, entablatures) and industrial motifs (steel beams, smokestacks, cranes), seems to encompass the rise and fall of Western culture.

In recent years, Murdock has also depicted weapons and vehicles of war that, like his industrial images, portend disaster, but a disaster somehow mediated by classical constancy, imminent awfulness adjourned by the enduring presence of Greek temple forms. The fact of landscape, too, speaks eternal certainties, even if the prairie brush fire on the horizon looks unnervingly like a nuclear firestorm.
Robin Laurence

FOCUS ON *BRIAN GROOMBRIDGE*

The Poet Looked/The Poet Slowly Rose to His Feet 1988
steel, copper, acid-etching
on stainless steel
Courtesy Cold City Gallery
Photo: Peter MacCallum



Balance and Power 1984
iron and copper
36 x 38 in.
Courtesy Cold City Gallery
Photo: Peter MacCallum

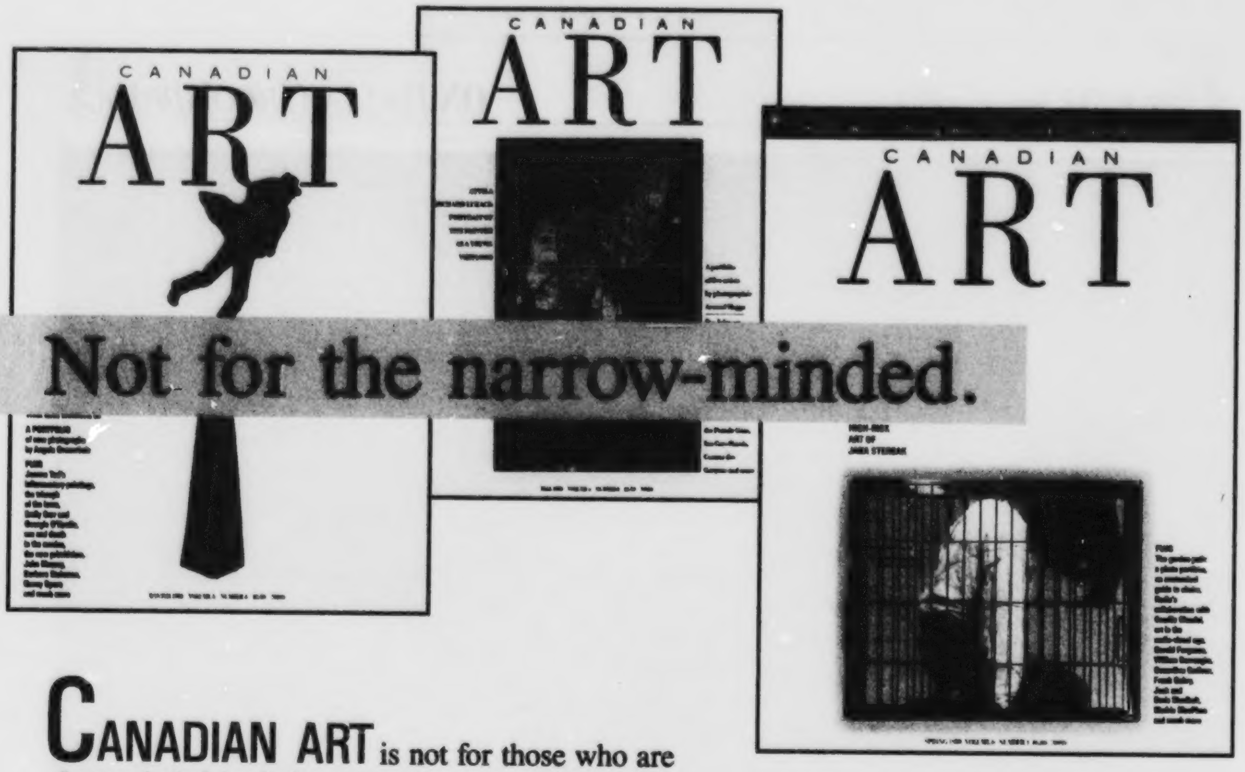
Brian Groombridge is a minimalist sculptor with a poetic vision. Shifting between austere reductivism and gentle lyricism, Groombridge forms a concurrent interplay between the cool machismo of industrial and architectural materials and his consistent employment of rich lyrical aesthetics. The nature of Groombridge's poetry is symbolic; he makes allegorical references to images and actions that remain notably absent in the art itself.

In his sculptural installation, *Evidence of the River* (1984), for example, Groombridge presented a minimalistic, elegant metal relief of a table with a tilted pitcher looming above it. The "evidence" of water is symbolized by its very absence. Deliberately staged in a state of incompletion, the installation formed a cohesive whole only when perceptually completed by the viewer.

What was most striking about Groombridge's recent installation at Cold City Gallery in Toronto was its open-endedness, which invited the viewer to psychologically enter the sculptures. One was initially met with an X configuration contructed out of oxidized green copper discs. The X symbol certainly contained myriad allusions, but its significance in relation to the installation remained open to the viewer's interpretation. Instead of employing the object's physical presence as an authoritative whole, delineating the individual vision of the artist, Groombridge's installation became an open and participatory theatre of symbolism where the internal experiences of the artist and audience were able to mix freely.

Groombridge in effect attempted to construct a state of animated theatricality: a state where the solid physicality of his metallic materials were rendered fluid and gestural. Placed centrally on the gallery floor in his Cold City installation was a casually contructed sculpture of a glider, made of copper plate and steel tubing. The glider appeared rough and unfinished: a skeletal structure with prominent welded joinings. It was raised at the front as if about to take off, implying in a single gesture the possibility of transcending the heaviness and permanence of the sculptural form. Like the pitcher tilted over the table, the glider was precariously suspended at the edge of motion; the viewer was left to complete the narrative.

Groombridge has optimistically attempted to solve what is perhaps the most crucial and complex dilemma of making art: the complete liberation of the representational object's material constrictions. It is only at this point that sculpture will cease to function as a physical representation of reality and become an active art of the lived world.
Earl Miller



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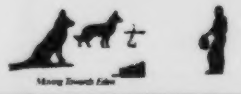

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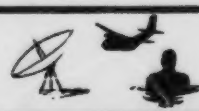

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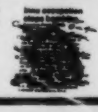

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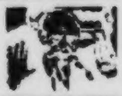

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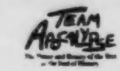

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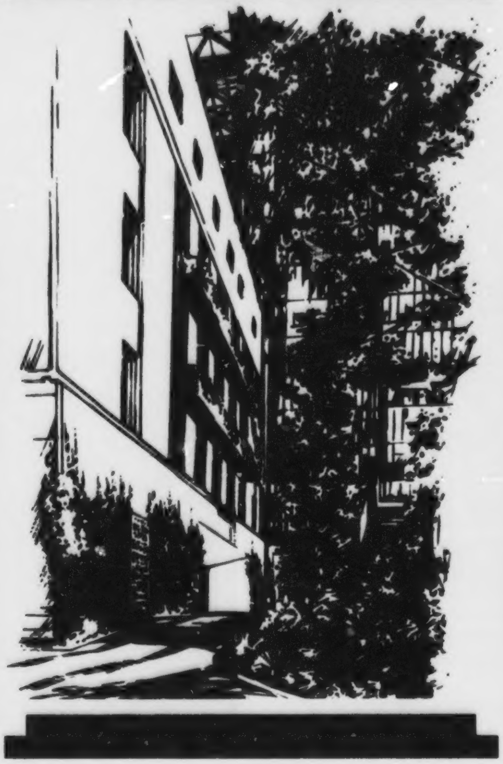

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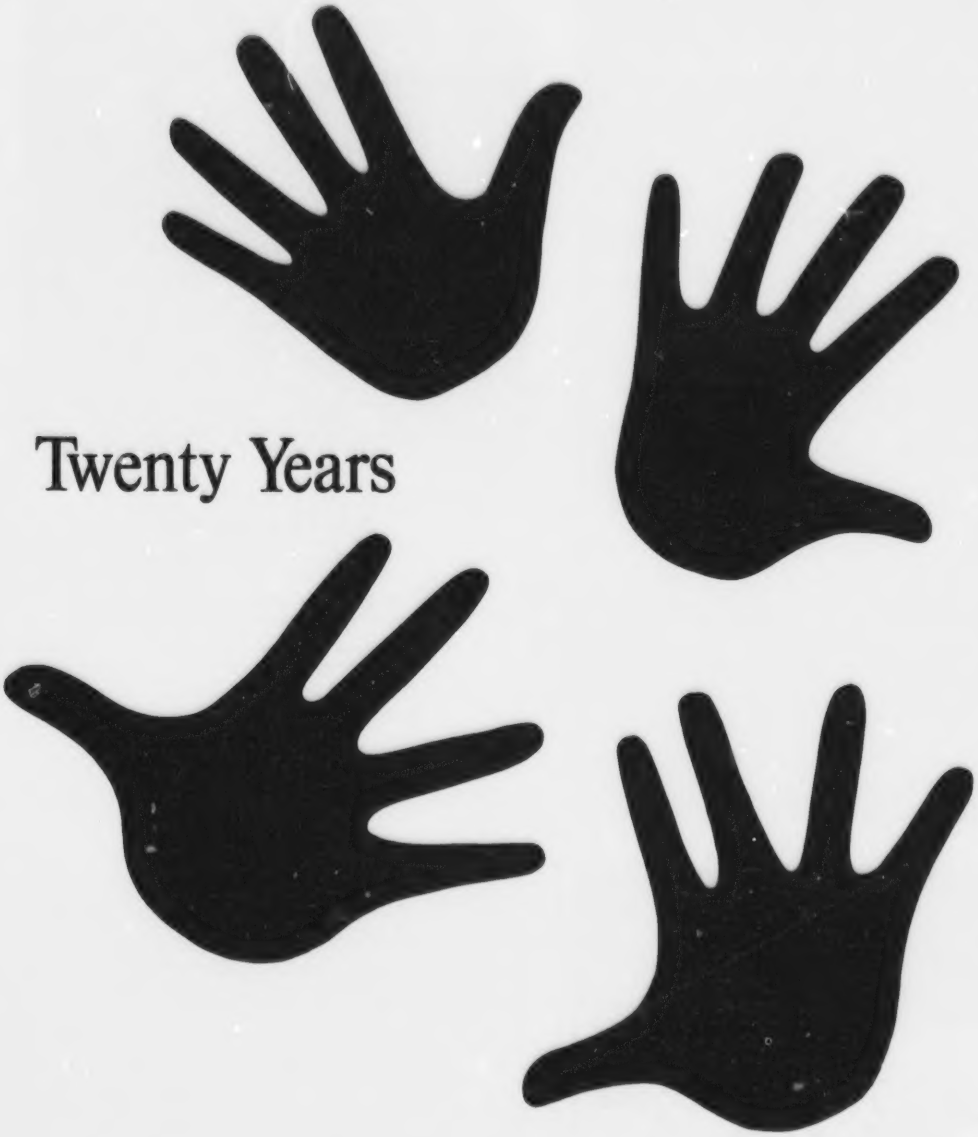

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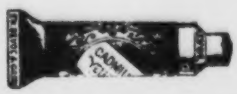

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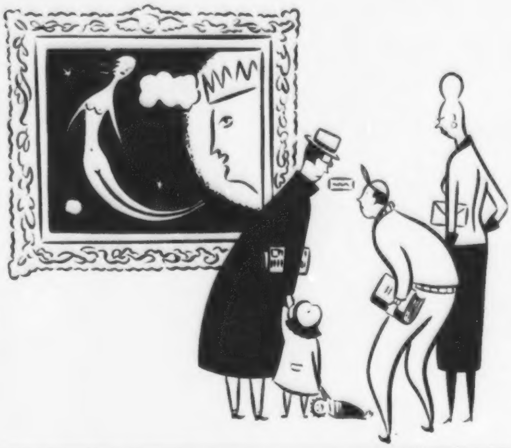

THE WRITING ON THE WALL: THE FINE ART OF READING THE FINE PRINT

People have come to expect certain things of the titles of works of art. That they should help us. That they should clarify the intentions of the artist. That they should, in fact, act as a visa on an art work's voyage out from the private realm of the artist's studio to the public domain of the gallery or museum. So integral are titles to our understanding of works of art that unarticulated choreographies govern the way we use them, each one inadvertently saying something about the orientation of the viewer. Do you look at them before looking at the work? After? During? Since titles act as a sort of idiot's guide to the object in question, does the self-respecting art audience struggle to avoid relying on them altogether?

I, for one, *do* look at titles. But they can play some mean tricks on you. They can dodge and weave and leave you in their intellectual dust. Consider Duchamp's *To Be Looked At (From the Other Side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close To, for Almost an Hour* (1918), a transparent glass sculpture into which various characteristically obscure forms are inscribed. According to the work's title, there is no way to view it correctly; one is always meant to view it from the other side. Duchamp has also clearly thrown down the gauntlet here as far as audience comfort is concerned. Gentle viewer is required to peer at the work, cyclops-like, for almost an hour and not less. Of course, Duchamp's diabolical way with a title was entirely intentional, of a piece with Dada's strategy of disrupting the established customs of the art world. With Dada, Duchamp's titles seem to say, the passive audience is impossible. One has to be in the mood to play ball.

More cheerless artists of a conceptualist bent were to take this hide-and-seek to more austere extremes. Every work in Donald Judd's recent retrospective at the Whitney Museum was untitled — or, to be more precise, had been titled *Untitled.* Like Duchamp, Judd had his reasons. Titling works of art implies a relation — representational or abstract — between the art object and the world of things and feelings. This, for Judd, was not on. The art object, in Judd's practice, is simply what it is. Supplying a title would inevitably set the wheels of metaphor in motion.

Titles of artworks, like the frames and pedestals used to present them, have always functioned to establish a context for a work's reception. By their very blandness, the titles of pre-Modern works — *Madonna and Child, The Judgement of Paris* — signal that the viewer is embarking on an unproblematic encounter. This picture is what it says it is. It takes its place within the ongoing discourse of other Madonnas and Children or Judgements of Paris. But a critical shift toward self-consciousness creeps into the titling of art with the advent of Realism, in the late 19th century. Suddenly we find titles like *Interior of the Gare Saint-Lazare* (Monet, 1877) and *Bal du Moulin de la Galette* (Renoir, 1876). What these titles tel us — in addition to their obvious declaration of subject matter — is "I was there" in this train station, in this outdoor café. Immediacy — the notion of the art object as the residue of a specific time and place — was of the utmost importance. This, too, has been taken to extremes. In the work of conceptual artist On Kawara, for example, a painting's title, *May 1, 1987*, is also its content. Against a monochrome canvas, Kawara literally prints, with paint, the date upon which the work was made — and that is that. Title and work fuse; the work is nothing more (nor less) than a record of its entry into Time.

In our own era, this kind of literalness seems to be on the wane. Rigorous is out; portentous is in. It would seem that titling is taking the lead in the creative process; increasingly, titles are the verbal constructions from which objects derive. A recent flip through a stack of art magazines yields *Seduction of the Complete, Echo or Fall of the Grand Tour* and *Spirit of the Staircase*, all of them as allegorically voluptuous as anything Rubens could have thought up. These titles point heroically to the great beyond; more often than not, the objects are left stranded behind.

Contemporary artists no doubt have their reasons for this type of linguistic foreplay, but as the relation between objects and the words that name them grows more and more tenuous, the opportunity for clarification melts away. No longer does a title offer safe mooring in a sea of interpretation. How you feel about this will depend on a couple of things. Do you assume that the artist's aim or obligation is necessarily to communicate? (No.) Do you think of the artist's creative activities as extending beyond the fabrication of the art object? (Yes.) Do you think indeterminacy can be an important aspect of creativity? (Yes.) Regardless of where you stand on these questions, the point is simply this: it always pays to read the small print.

Sarah Milroy

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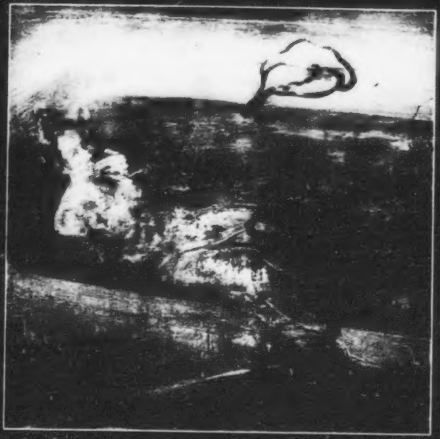

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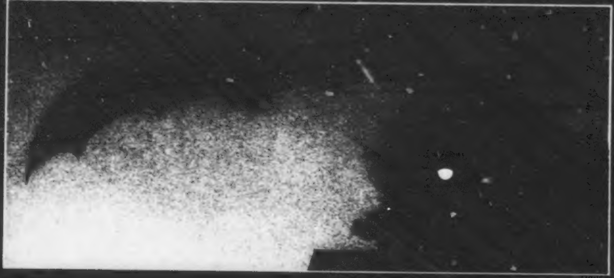

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CANADIAN ART

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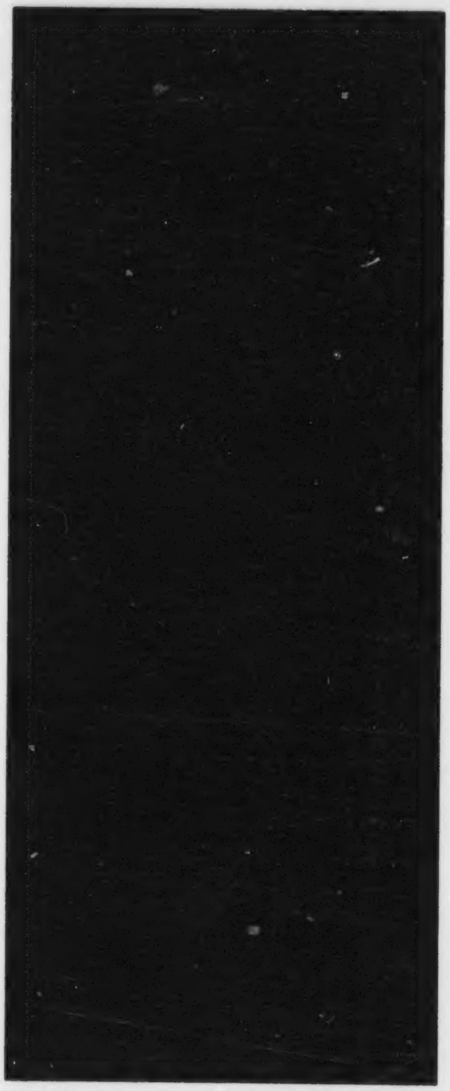

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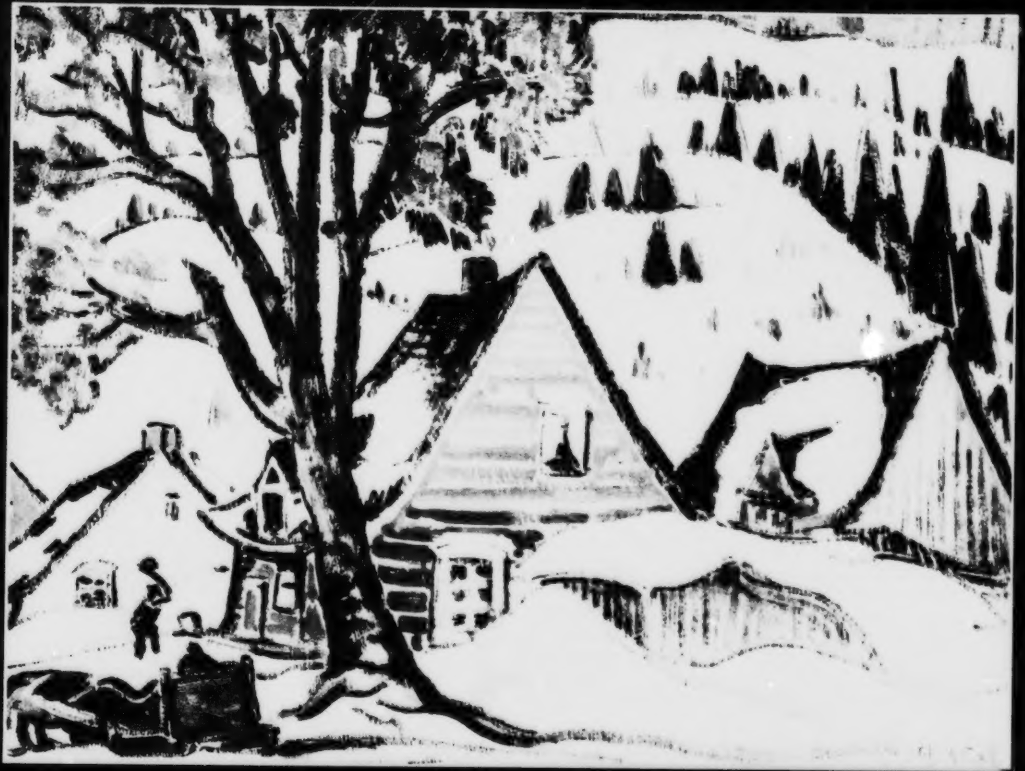

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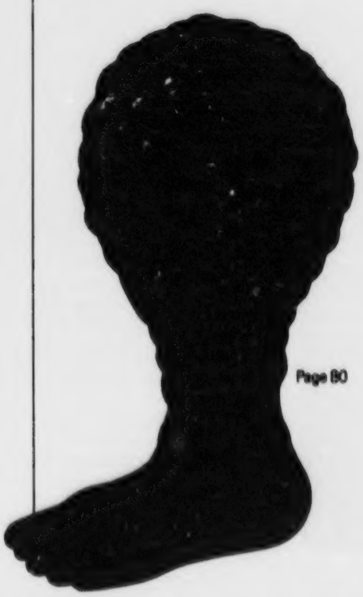

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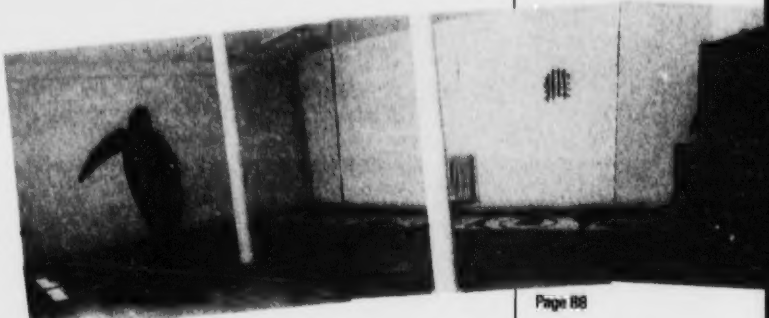

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ART

Volume 6, Number 3
Fall/September 1989

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Cover: Tom Dean
Detail from *Excerpts from a Description of the Universe* 1988
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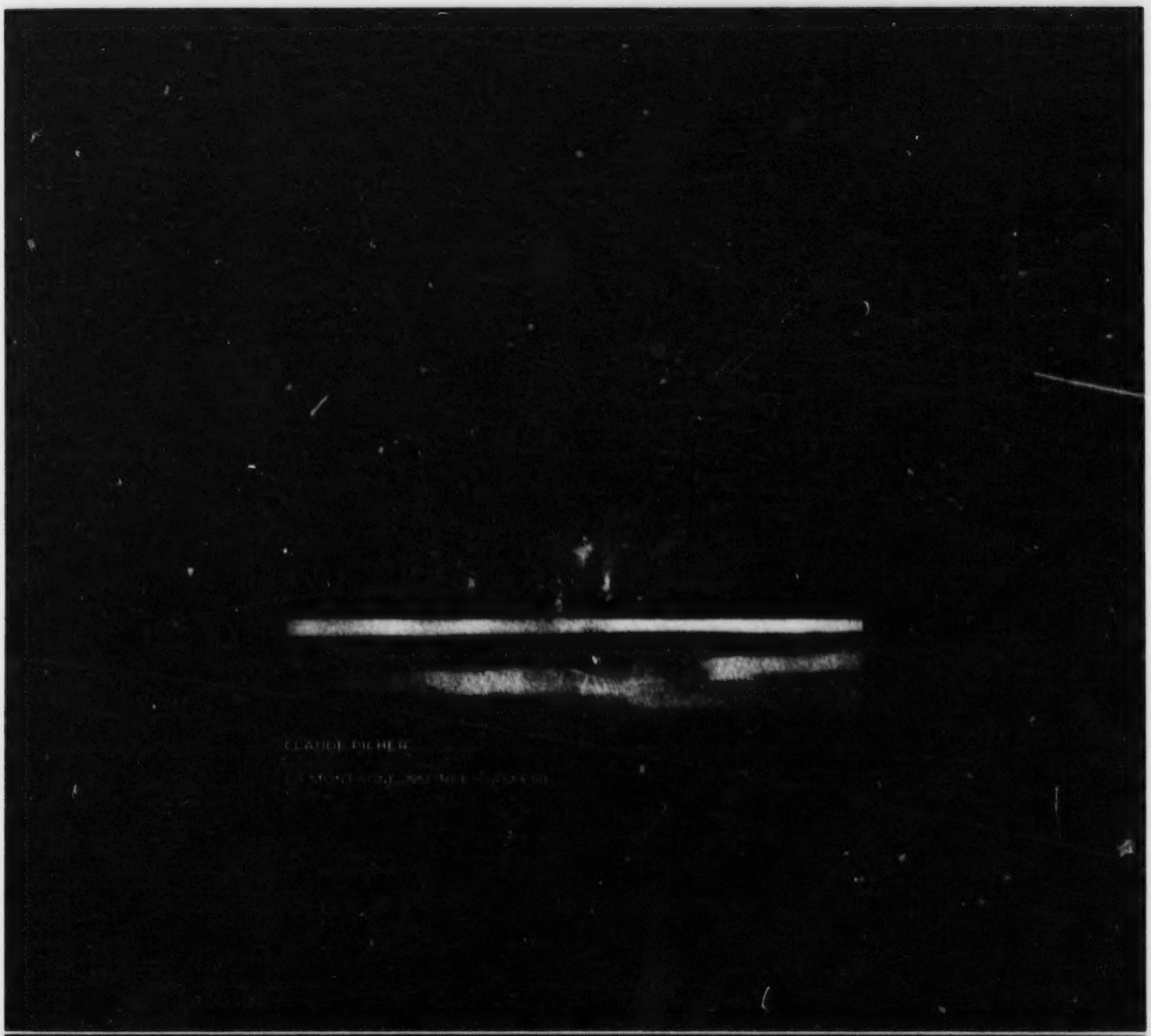
Photo: J. Williamson



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EDITORIAL

This issue marks the fifth anniversary of *Canadian Art*. Everyone who works, or has worked, at the magazine is proud of the fact that we have flourished over the past five years, given that the visual arts are all too often — and unfairly — regarded as culturally marginal compared to, say, the popular appeal of movies or even literature.

We celebrated this particular anniversary in the knowledge that we've gained not only more readers and subscribers across the country but we've also received the praise of our peers in the magazine industry. In May, *Canadian Art* won its first-ever National Magazine Awards: photographer Arnaud Maggs garnered a silver medal for his series of black-and-white portraits of artists that appeared in last fall's issue, and art director James Ireland won a gold medal for his work on "Savage Pencils," the piece we ran on comix artists in the winter issue.

Sarah Milroy has been associated with *Canadian Art* since its inception in 1984, first as a staff member and for the past year as a contributing editor. It is she who co-ordinates the Fast Forward section of the magazine, and in many ways it's a frustrating task. Every magazine suffers from space limitations, and we often end up feeling we don't really do justice to the sheer number of worthwhile exhibitions that are mounted each season across the country. Fall, however, is our biggest issue of the year, which coincides with what is regarded in many ways as the most important season in the visual arts. Certainly it's one of the busiest, and happily, in this issue's Fast Forward we have the space to reflect that reality.

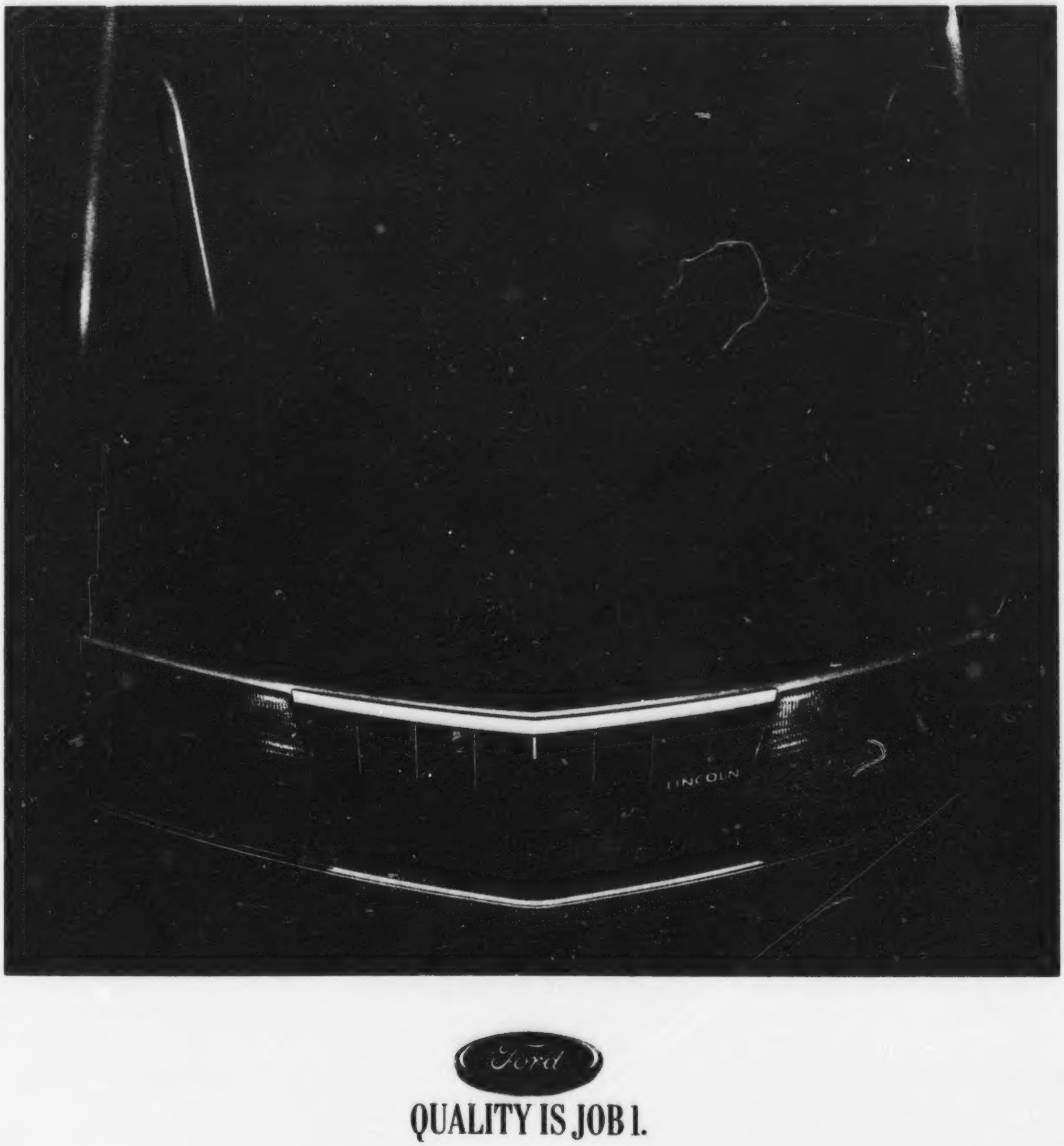
Milroy displays another side to her critical talents in writing the cover story on Tom Dean, her first feature for the magazine. Dean has covered a wide spectrum of media over the span of his career, but his work, as Milroy demonstrates, possesses an internal coherence and intelligence that make this variousness all the more compelling.

In keeping with *Canadian Art*'s own variousness, this issue also contains articles on such thematically diverse artists as Montreal installation artist Irene F. Whittome, painters Medrie MacPhee and Jack Goldstein, and Vancouver artist Stan Douglas. You'll also find a piece on photographer and book designer Michael Torosian and a sample of sculptor John McKinnon's spare, elegant furniture.

All of which goes to prove, I think, that the visual arts, far from being marginal, in fact occupy an increasingly central and far-reaching place in our culture. And that, of course, is what makes *Canadian Art* so challenging to put together.

JOCELYN LAURENCE
EDITOR

NOT ALL
WORKS OF ART
ARE FOUND
IN A GALLERY.



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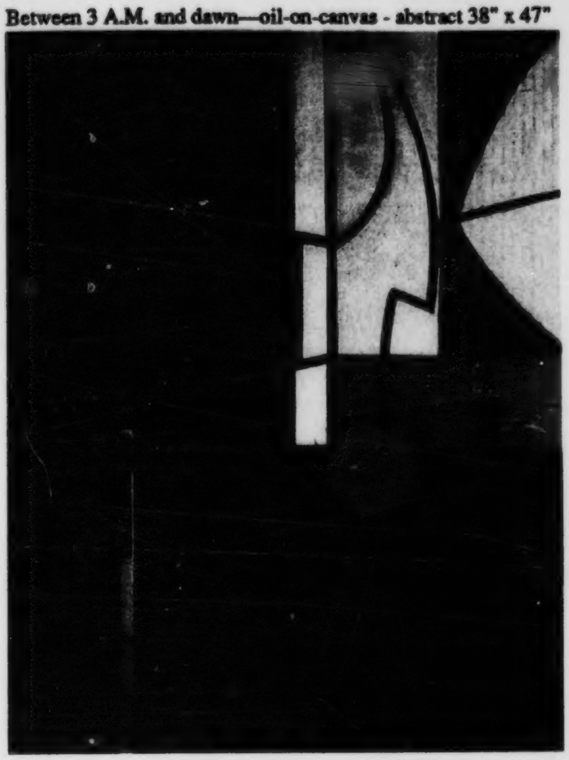

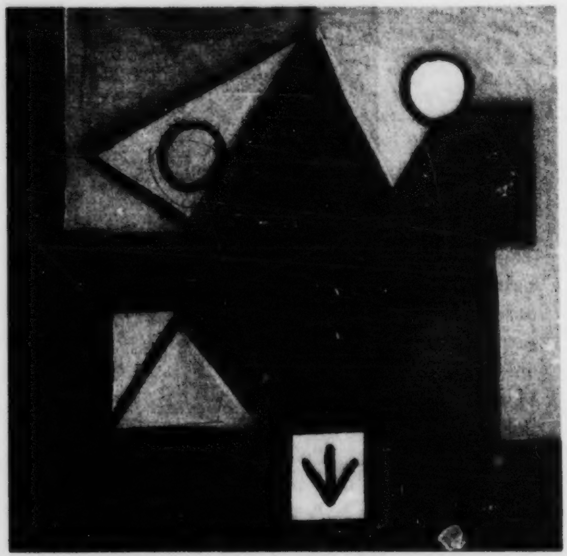

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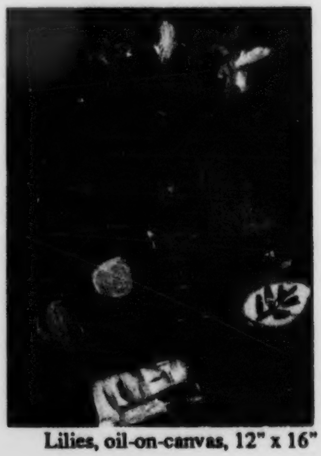
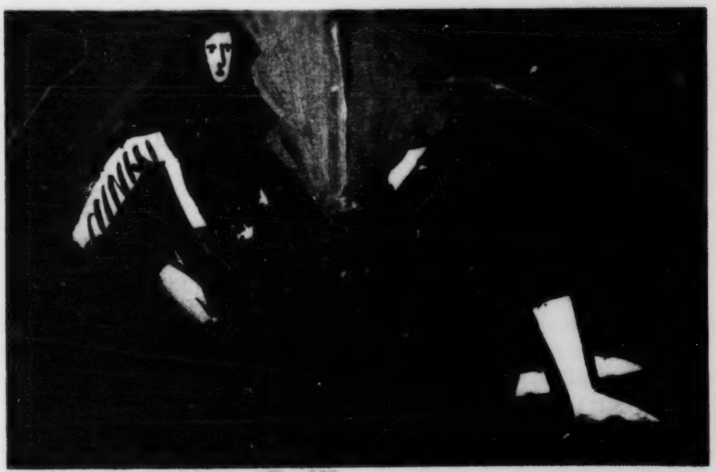


Lilies, oil-on-canvas, 12" x 16"



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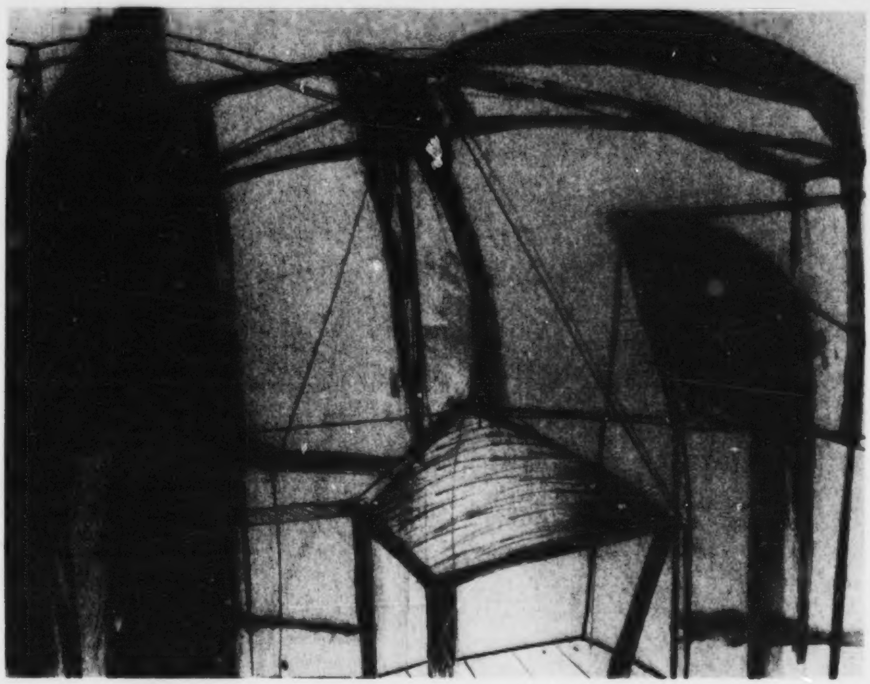

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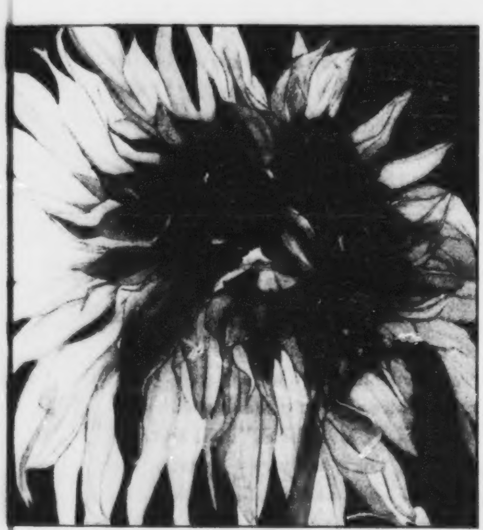
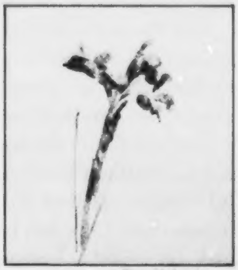
The Female Gaze

BY SUSAN CREAN

A PAINTERLY PERSISTENCE: WHEN A ROSE IS MORE THAN A ROSE





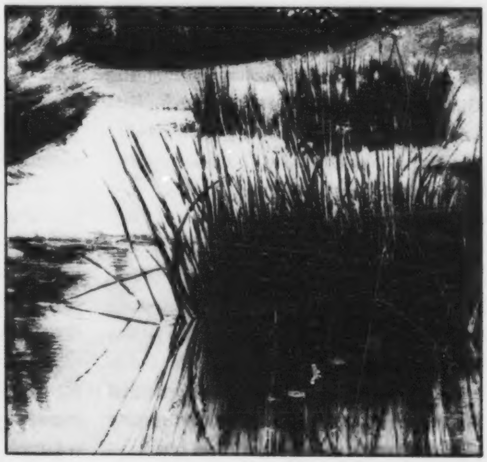
Top: Helen Lucas
About Face 1987
Acrylic on canvas
5 x 5 ft.
Above: Brooke Gibson
Single Iris on Rag Ground 1985
Watercolor on rag paper
48 x 54 in.
Photo: Michael Tong
Right: Jerry Grey
Flowering Reeds in Crother's Pond 1988
Liquetex on canvas
63 ½ x 56 ½ in.

It was April 1982, in Ottawa. Still bleak and grey and hungover with winter. But inside the gallery it was spring. Bright, translucent pinks, yellows and that ineffable Australian turquoise, shimmering as only watercolor can, from inside the d'Arches paper. These were Jerry Grey's Australian landscapes, made as a result of a two-month sojourn down under in 1980. Like the trip itself, the show was a watershed, a radical shift in artistic direction. At the time, Grey's marriage was ending, she was ill and realized that living with her condition was going to mean some changes for a time, such as reducing the scale of her painting and switching to less physically demanding media. (She'd just completed a large, complex mural for the Statistics Canada, Jean Talon Building in Ottawa made of baked porcelain on steel.) Yet the mood of this new work was far from sombre.

Necessity was the mother of the artist's return to color, to painterly technique and to nature. With her own troubled body reminding her daily of the physicality of life, she turned her intellect to plumbing another side of nature and memory. A gifted photographer and superb draughtswoman (in an age that has forgotten the why-for of drawing), Grey notes, "It struck me looking at the early landscapes of New Zealand that painting is so much more animated and alive than photography. Photos can bring back the memory of a place, but not that element of space. A painting, however, can be as real as the experience."

In the spring of 1984 she produced her West Coast broom series ("I happened to arrive in Vancouver in May when it was blooming"), watercolors bringing to life the wild, hanging-garden profusion of soft-fleshed sprays of yellow and violet. Landscape, which Grey sees as a living thing rather than the usual heroic foil for human deeds and sensibilities, is brought close up. Distance falls away and the world explodes in sensation. Says Grey, "There seem to be two kinds of people who plant things: those who appreciate the miracle of growth and regeneration of life, and those who think of it as a control process. There are some people, well, I wouldn't want to be their plant."

The Impressionists weren't wrong, of course. Color is light and flowers are an



ideal way to explore this physical phenomenon. But as botanical events in their own right, flowers are a subject too. Their intense display of *élan vital* and the accoutrements of sexuality in eye-catching, nose-pleasing, touch-tempting splendor is unavoidable. You can't look at them without seeing the genitalia resplendent, pistil and stamen surrounded by vulvic petal designs. Or can you? Is it possible that women identify with nature in art differently than men? See flowers as erotica, for example, where men don't? Might this conceivably relate to the different attitudes that researchers have found in the psychological make-up of males and females in our culture — the masculine absorbed with conquest, seeing nature as "other," the feminine striving to meet nature halfway, to incorporate it in the self?

In art some subjects are, indeed, loaded. All subjects, of course, are coded, and flowers have historically been classified in western culture as "decorative" or "genre" art. If you were Odilon Redon or Claude Monet, you could get away with painting vases or lily ponds full of them and it would still be understood you had committed an artistic act, worthy of formal analysis. If, however, you were Berthe Morisot or Mary Cassatt, it didn't work that way. Flowers painted by women were read (and discounted) as domestic trivia, definitely not Universal Theme material.

The subtext goes like this: it was one thing for women to move into the male art scene, but it is something else for women artists to expect the male art scene to follow them back into the female world. Such is the meaning behind the admonition still given to women that they not bring childbirth or motherhood into their work for fear of demeaning their Art. The prohibition against flowers has the same feel to it. Although having children is surely one of the most universal human events one can think of, and flowers are just about as common, children and gardens are associated in the mainstream mind with women's work, the private realm, and thus insignificance. (Hence the derogatory cast to the very word "flowery.")

When feminists say that the personal is political, perhaps we are also saying that the personal is public, that our lives are as fit a subject matter for art as, say, war or mountain climbing. Brooke Gibson is one artist who has been painting, planting and living with flowers all her artistic life. Drawn by the color and the vast variety of their world, she says she finds herself forever returning to them, "Not because it's easy, because it isn't. It is all too easy to be hackneyed and as a result artists like Georgia O'Keeffe have had to go to great lengths to avoid sentimentality." For Gibson, coming back to flowers means returning to the bigness and wonder of the garden and to the solace of focussed concentration. "I resisted it for a long time," she admits, "perhaps consciously, because it didn't seem that anything serious could come from painting flowers." Which is where the challenge lies — taking what is apparently still a proscribed subject for women and liberating it from the stereotype.

"Women are enthralled by gardens and babies. We allow ourselves that," Gibson adds. We allow ourselves to see gardens and babies as miraculous, as the outcome and raison d'être (biologically, at least) of sexuality. Mother Nature can appreciate this, even if male culture can't. So Gibson with her ethereal cut flowers floating in ecstatic solitude against white paper backgrounds, with her busy garden scenes bursting kinetic energy, is painting from the centre of a female tradition.

For Helen Lucas there has always been a strong association between flowers and color and joy, but only since 1980 have the sunflowers, gladiola and irises taken over her large five-foot-plus canvases. When they did, it was at the end of a dark and difficult passage out of hidebound (woman-bound) tradition and a celibate marriage into the clear light of physical and emotional self-awareness. Like Jerry Grey's landscapes, Lucas's flowers were part of a healing process, a projection of the will to survive and to recreate. This is not to say that either woman's work can be understood as therapeutic; it is to acknowledge that the artistic process operates on more than one level of knowing and is almost always a process of revelation. Which may be why it is so often described as a search for truth.

Throughout the '60s and '70s, Lucas's figure paintings in oil and charcoal were monochromatic and devoid of color. "As a Greek woman," she says now, "I suppose I was fascinated with black." But as "a nice Greek girl whose mother said, 'Don't divorce until I die,' " she was also doing battle with ancient demons. In 1973, Lucas published *Angelica*, the story of an angel who comes down to earth because she wants to be a real woman in the real world. Before she can learn to dance, however, Angelica has to learn something about anger and repression. Angelica the "fallen" angel became Lucas's alter-ego, accompanying her through a period that also produced an extended series of drawings called *Diary* in which the search for sexuality is the central theme. These Lucas considers the most important artistic contribution she has made so far. But still she feels uncomfortable when they are too closely related to her, for they are as unreserved as they are lyrical. "In the *Diary* drawings I had to show vaginas and breasts. I had to say all of me is beautiful and to celebrate it."

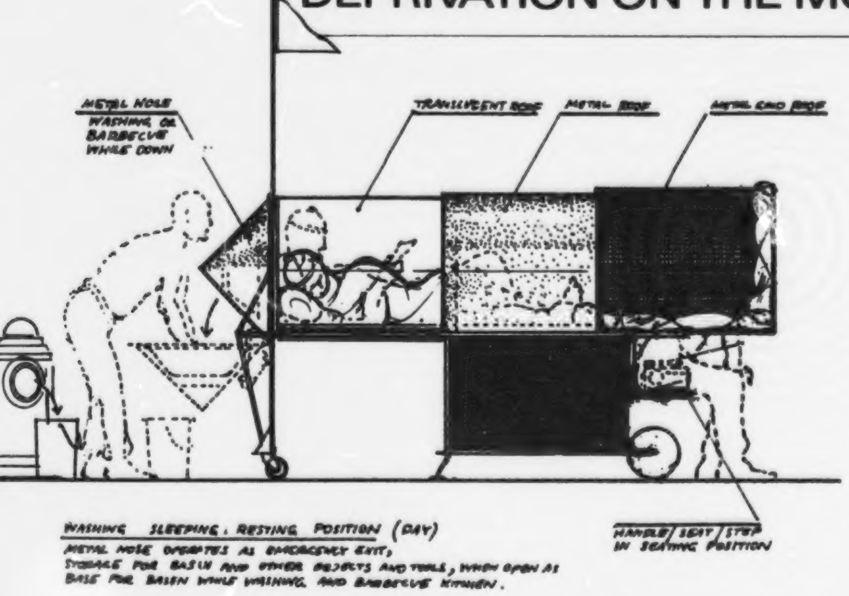
When the flowers came, it was as if her art had a mind of its own. They began as paintings of a woman with voluptuous tears flowing from her eyes. "The tears flowed down the sides of the paintings and became hands which slowly reversed, coming up out of the ground as flowers." Suddenly they were there — magnificent, iconic and trembling with pleasure. Finally, says Lucas, "I had an image that did not openly say vaginas and breasts. There I found my woman's psyche could say a lot of things without being direct."

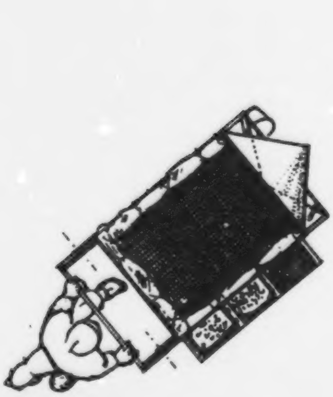
And therein is the key to the perception and the art. Lucas feels that the size of her work, its grand and powerful impact, has exempted her from the "flower syndrome" and she may be right. Yet I notice that the critics have kept a disdainful distance, as they have from Brooke Gibson, and from Jerry Grey once she took up flowers. Undeterred, all three have remained true to their artistic instincts, continue to show regularly and to attract the delight and enthusiasm of a growing audience. This says a good deal for the innate good sense of the gallery-going public and rather less for the overwrought opinion of critics who haven't tumbled to the fact that a rose is a rose and not just a flower. It may be a fantasy, a metaphor, a tarantella, or old magic. Or as Helen Lucas puts it, "You don't paint flowers; you paint what they mean."

BY GARY MICHAEL DAULT

The Object

WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS: PRIVILEGE AND DEPRIVATION ON THE MOVE


METAL NOSE
WASHING OR BARBECUE WHILE DOWN
TRANSLUCENT ROOF
METAL ROOF
METAL END ROOF
WASHING SLEEPING, RESTING POSITION (DAY)
METAL NOSE OPERATES AS EMERGENCY EXIT, STORAGE FOR BASIN AND OTHER OBJECTS AND TOOLS, WHEN OPEN AS BASE FOR BASIN WHILE WASHING AND BARBECUE KITCHEN.
HANDLE/SEAT/STEP IN SEATING POSITION



Krzysztof Wodiczko
Sketches of a "shelter vehicle" made of metal and Plexiglas for homeless people, 1988

Trying to drive through the city keeps you thinking about vehicles. You think first maybe, with deep nostalgia, about Paul and Percival Goodman's brilliant study *Communitas* (1947), with its pastoral-utopian proposal for banning all automobiles from Manhattan ("...the urban beauty is the beauty of walking"). You think about excess, waste, crowding, late-capitalist wind-down, fossil fuels, exhalations generally. You think about getting stuck in traffic and you *get* stuck in traffic and chances are you're stuck because of a double-parked stretch limo. The stretch limo: rolling icon of a spurious exclusivity, hireable haven for those persons Marshall McLuhan used to characterize as "well-known for their well-known-ness," parodic class-consciousness on wheels, available to anybody who can cough up sixty bucks for an hour of life behind black windows, sighing around town in a gigantic pair of inhabitable sunglasses.

I hate stretch limos and so does everybody I know. As far as I can tell, whatever has been referred to as a "stretch" anything, like those old Stretch Douglas DC-8s that hobbled through the skies until recently, was invariably the product of somebody's greed and has been, as a result, the triumph of close-packing over safety and comfort. The stretch limo's inordinate length is no doubt more a matter of a puerile phallicism than it is a question of cost-efficiency per running foot, but its stretchiness points up a similar kind of conceptual mingyness within the vitals of its design: all that stretch is just *lebensraum*, a force field of showy privacy, a receptacle for the mechanically expansive sensibility. It wouldn't be quite so dumb if the rich actually rode around in these things. But they don't. The rich drive beige Rolls Royces that look about as dashing as Chrysler K-cars. Or quiet, modest Mercedes-Benzes and self-effacing BMWs. Stretch limos are for fading rock stars or embarrassed newlyweds.

Stretch limos are the empty signifiers par excellence of urban culture. What they are supposed to do and fail to do is to serve as a location of privilege within the forced populism of a city's congested streets. The stretch limo is a sort of long dash, an intake of breath, imbedded in the unparsable confusion of generalized traffic flow. Rather than serving as a means of locating privilege, as a lens for making wealth momentarily visible, they serve only as a vulgar reminder of the essential invisibility of the rich and the replacement of the rich by anyone, rock star or newlywed, who has designs upon our attentiveness.

A trick question. What, vehicularly speaking, is the opposite of a stretch limo? The answer might well be one of the vehicles for the urban homeless designed by "public artist" Krzysztof Wodiczko (in consultation with several homeless men), shown last year at the Clocktower in New York. Best known, probably, for his pointed and politically deconstructive slide projections onto public buildings, Wodiczko, who began his career in his native Poland and essentially got rolling in Canada, ultimately representing this country at the 1986 Venice Biennale, has been getting an enormous amount of international attention lately for his *Homeless Vehicle Project*: two articles and a suite of photographs in *October* 47 (Winter 1988), a drawing and photo in *Harper's* (May 1989) and a sizable hunk of General Idea's final *File* magazine (No. 29), among other important media appearances. What Wodiczko has essentially done is to design a pushcart-like vehicle constructed of aluminum, steel mesh, sheet metal and Plexiglas that is an extrapolation of the purloined or abandoned shopping cart so frequently favored by those urban homeless who use them for the collection of the cans and bottles they recycle for a living. More than a carrier for this flotsom and jetsam of metropolitan overflow, the vehicle is also to provide a certain minimal degree of comfort and protection, being equipped with a spartan toilet, a seat for resting, a sort of stretching-out place for sleeping and a pull-down weapon-like nose cone which can evidently be used for a sink or possibly as a sort of wok for cooking.

Support for Wodiczko's polarizing *Homeless Vehicle* seems either to be vociferous to the point of near derangement or nonexistent to the point where it flips over into something approaching downright hostility. I am, myself, a sort of agnostic about it. Wodiczko has made it clear that he has no plans to market or distribute the vehicle and that it is thus far an entirely hypothetical structure designed to function as an image of the plight of the urban homeless. In a related article in *October* 47 ("Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City"), art historian Rosalyn Deutsche writes, "By increasing the visibility of the homeless, who, in reality, already inhabit urban space, the *Homeless Vehicle* dramatizes the right of the poor not to be isolated and excluded." The vehicle is or can be, according to Deutsche, a "tool used against redevelopment" since, as she sees it, redevelopment (and even its delicate precursor, gentrification) is based on the assumption that the poor do not exist — or a least ought not to. Instead of restoring a surface calm to the "ascendant" city as reformist plans try to do, Deutsche argues, the Wodiczko vehicle "disrupts the coherent urban image, which today is only constructed by neutralizing homelessness."

Just as the stretch limo presumably locates privilege (though fails in reality to do so), so the *Homeless Vehicle* would locate poverty (which it would no doubt do superbly in visual not to say theatrical ways). Which is where a lot of the opposition to the project cuts in. Even Deutsche, who is one of the project's impassioned supporters, admits that the project faces ("openly confronts" is the way she puts it) a troubling question: "How is it possible to recognize and respond to homelessness as an emergency situation and still not foster, as do some proposals designing equipment for the homeless, an acceptance of current conditions and concealment of their causes?" A good, tough, possibly defeating question. If the *Homeless Vehicle* were ever to be built (by whom?) and distributed to the homeless (how? by whom?), would it continue to function as an image, as a protesting utterance? Artists and designers and architects I have talked to, all of whom seem greatly disgruntled about Wodiczko's project, immediately start ticking off the problems: Doesn't the vehicle locate the homeless user so profoundly that it possibly singles him out for abuse or attack? Doesn't the structure stigmatize, in other words, as obviously as it ameliorates? One young painter I talked to was utterly horrified by the vehicle, seeing it as a rolling cage with its owner transformed into a prisoner, the victim, in her rather gothic but perhaps ultimately not unrealistic mind, of burnings and pillagings, a street gang drawn into a vicious circle around the terrified vehicle owner like Indians encircling a wagon train.

What is perhaps most troubling about the *Homeless Vehicle Project* is the ease with which it turns into an addendum to the sad history of radical chic. Wodiczko's vehicle and the stretch limo can too easily take their places in a dishearteningly paradoxical relationship: whereas the stretch limo is supposed to be an emblem of wealth and power and isn't, so the *Homeless Vehicle* is supposed to be born from the needs of street people and isn't. Wodiczko may well be known not just as an artist but as a "public artist," but he is, for all that, an artist whose career began by making vehicles that were satirical in a largely irrelevant way (like his vehicle for intellectuals powered by the meditative walking back and forth of its rider) and who — as the "engaged" artist he has become — still feeds, as any artist does, on content. His gathering of a few of the urban poor into the felicity of the *Homeless Vehicle* planning process ("Daniel," "Oscar" and "Victor" — collaborators who do not seem to merit the revealing of their last names) and his endless reprinting of their dialogues together (the audio tape of which apparently played constantly during his exhibition at the Clocktower) seem exceedingly sentimental (Wodiczko: "Right, okay, this is very helpful."/Daniel: "See, I gave you a lot of good ideas"). Not the least sentimental part of it is the way you feel the artist's basic amazement, in the course of the talks, that the homeless poor can come up with any useful contributions at all. What it comes down to is that the urban homeless are the content — almost literally — of the new body of Wodiczko's work. This is, for many viewers, as exploitive as it is compassionate, as much entertainment as engagement. None of this is to say that Wodiczko's heart is not in the right place, that his interest in the urban poor is unredeemably parasitical or luxurious. It does end, however, by placing his work within the widespread, admired, but not very trustworthy discourse that manifests itself today in work that appropriates political ideas and concerns in an essentially inauthentic, snap-on way, leaving their full working out to the sentimentalizing vicissitudes of time and fate.

The Screen

By John Scott

WILD THINGS TWO: A CONTINUING LOOK AT GANGS AND THE MEDIA

Above: Marlon Brando in *Apocalypse Now* (Omni Zoetrope, 1979)
Right: Jack Nicholson as The Joker in *Batman* (Warner Brothers, 1989)

World class — that supposedly self-descriptive phrase has been reverberating through the city of Toronto lately like some kind of electronically generated, moronic mantra. Meanwhile, members of the media — who in large part helped propagate the concept — have lost themselves in a state of delerium somewhere between self-congratulation and magical thinking. Making the Word into flesh used to be considered quite a trick. Making the Word into architecture, willing inchoate lumps of reinforced concrete into postmodern structures (able to leap building codes and zoning laws in a single bound) isn't bad either. But the newest and hottest desired reality is for the Word to become World.

This doesn't simply mean that Toronto has an ambition to achieve certain fast international standards in its architecture or facilities (which is to say, in its physical qualities as a city) in relationship to those of New York or Rome, but rather that it now wants to become one with that globe-spanning megalopolis where Real Time and Real Events can be said to occur.

Real here takes on a perverse twist, referring not so much to concrete reality but to primary images from which a series of subsequent images is derived. Toronto apparently wants to align itself with a notion of the larger world, becoming in the process a full member of the Congress of Power from which all history flows. What this amounts to is the feeling that Toronto cannot truly be a world-class city until we have world-class problems — gangs, drugs, violence. But even these we perceive at some level to be merely symptoms of something else, some other condition loose in the Real which must also be present if we are truly to belong.

In 1979, the two-storey high, Technovision talking head of Marlon Brando as Colonel Kurtz in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* looked directly out into the camera/audience and articulated clearly and pivotally the beginning of a growing shift in our notion of perceived reality and the nature of the World. In this now infamous monologue, Brando/Kurtz recalls the "genius" of the Viet Cong in hacking off the arms of little Vietnamese children whom he and his men have just innoculated against polio. He experiences a historical, philosophical epiphany, realizing that history belongs to the VC — that they are stronger than us by virtue of the fact that they are capable of embracing the irrational, the demonic, as a means of achieving a specific goal. They are disciplined cadres and at the same time operate outside moral constraints or socialization. Kurtz's final realization/rationalization in response to this new awareness is that he must become what he has beheld. In order to confront his enemies, he must find the violence and irrationality at the heart of Western consciousness.

In the '50s and '60s a number of socially conscious films like *The Wild One* and *12 Angry Men* seemed determined to do exactly the reverse — to use the liberal tradition of humanist analysis to make sense of the seemingly unintelligible violence of youth gangs.

However, by the time Michael Cimino's film *The Deer Hunter* was released in 1978, individuals who had opposed the military excesses of America in the Vietnam war suddenly began to view things in a different light. Cimino created one of the most demonic representations of human behavior ever constructed, as the VC forced American soldiers to play Russian roulette while betting on the outcome. The image was so potent, so compelling, you could almost hear the shuffle of feet as America took two steps to the right. A new mythology was beginning to transform historical memory. Vietnam became more than just a clash of ideologies at the end of colonialism; it was perceived as another place where the same dark forces that rampaged through *Jaws* (1975) and *The Exorcist* (1973) were already present.

This belief — the secular acknowledgement of irrational, independent evil — has always existed in Western literature, but it has positively flourished in movies in the last two decades to the point where it is now an unspoken collective given. Certainly any foreign culture or anywhere geographically remote, including the socially isolated inner city, are all regarded as sites of barbarism. After *Deliverance* (1972) it became clear that even the once pastoral countryside was populated by murderous sodomites. It is also common knowledge that *Nightmare on Elm Street*'s Freddy Krueger's doorway to Hell is located in any or all of our banal suburbs.

Whether we have genuinely retreated into a primitive mode of thinking — fetishizing and personifying the irrational into an independent entity — or whether we have simply rationalized our tendencies to barbarism as a lurking, *a priori* darkness that is part of the human package, it now forms the basis of our behavior in relation to how we perceive the world. In response to the recent vicious Central Park "wilding" attacks, for example, North America seems merely to have crossed itself to ward off evil and completely rejected the option of understanding. As a culture, we increasingly demand punishment, not justice.

In the years following the American defeat in Vietnam, we have witnessed an unprecedented increase in the sophisticated use of torture as a means not just of information gathering but, more importantly, as a means of manifesting our own political will and obliterating the enemy's. It was almost as if we believed we could somehow convince an opponent of the futility of his resistance once it was seen in the light (or, more accurately, the darkness) of the inhuman nature of our own acts. By so believing, we have aligned ourselves with those who would like to demonstrate the irresistible demonic strength that accrues to anyone who embraces the irrational.

Take the desecrations inflicted on the bodies of victims of political struggle in South America. What is truly hideous is how many of those perpetrating these grisly and deplorable acts were found, under questioning, to have been trained by the CIA. Could it be that we have finally embraced Kurtz/Brando's suggestion and abandoned all notions of human constraint and judgment? Perhaps we have opted to embrace the irrational instead, adopting a posture of fearsome demonic resolve as a means of countering the committed revolutionary.

This notion seems to form the wacky and perverse logic on which the current obsession with Batman is based. Michael Keaton's Bruce Wayne/Batman is the dark cruel face of yuppiedom revealed, Super Yuppie, in fact — the driving, shrewd, fabulously rich social nexus of such power and strength that his demonic intelligence and energies can only be challenged and released as a great, murderous, crime-fighting bat. His strength seems to flow from his embracing the Darkness. The murder of his family at the hands of criminals seems not so much a motivating rationale but rather a moment of inspirational clarity (much like Kurtz's) in which he has a glimpse of the true face of reality.

I'm not sure if Batman as the new Prince of Darkness is the new postmodern hero but Jack Nicholson as the Joker, the babbling voice of the Abyss, sure is the first truly postmodern villain. Something irrational, horrible beyond darkness. A glaring fluorescent tube illuminating needless oral surgery performed for laughs. His badness is something new, not necessarily criminal acts committed for personal gain or even a megalomaniac fantasy of world domination (evil genius) but art turned inside out. "I'm the first fully functional homicidal artist." Joker seems to be at war with logical causality itself, or at least all normal human communication and social exchanges. He attempts to disrupt even the Body, the constructed image of the Self and the (*gasp!*) smooth flow of economic exchange of consumer goods that radiate from this image. He's bad, not like General Noriega, more like the dadaists and Syd Vicious kicked into a diabolical overdrive so bad he necessitates what we've become — a virulent irrationality that justifies any foreign or domestic policy that maintains a semblance of order.

What becomes really scary is the degree to which we are able to collectively accept pseudofascistic Super Yuppie Batman (black leather, chrome steel, super surveillance techniques, Power and Money) as a means to counter the irrational barbarism we now fetishize all around us.

After all, over a period of years and in direct response to the constant reiteration of the media, we have come to accept that the irrational — radical, disembodied evil — is now an independent force in the world, a malevolent virus floating free on the planet, ready to infest any area where the correcting sanitary effect of law is absent. The past, the future, the ghetto, the different are all equally vulnerable and all equally suspect as generators of this virus-evil. Which helps to explain the curiously obsessive, pornographic gaze with which Toronto regards its gang members, drug dealers and users, prostitutes and so on — those transgressive Others whose presence defines Toronto as a full member in the Congress of Power. More than any accomplishment of civic architecture, it is the city's subterranean transgressives who now color its being.

In the sense that the death of a young Confederate soldier brought into being a romantic vision of the glorious Confederate South that never existed, the agony of every rape victim, the distress of every beaten child, and the death of each gunned-down policeman bring Toronto closer to the feverishly sought-after, lunatic definition of itself as world class — a player, a real city, a genuine centre of power. One can imagine the tombstones of the victims of the city's mindless fall into the future: they died that we might become truly cosmopolitan.

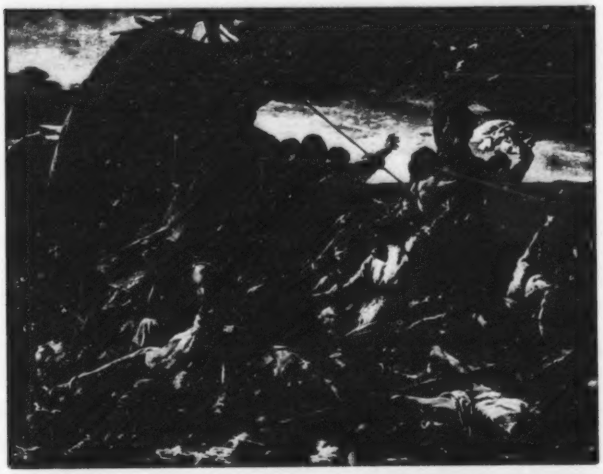
BY IHOR HOLUBIZKY

The Revolver

CULTURAL AMNESIA: MEDITATIONS ON ART AND THE END OF HISTORY

During a casual exchange, the artist stated that his work was about oppression. The reply was, "Oh...let me guess...you're against it."

It would be easy to disregard the retort as a collision between well-meaning naïveté and socialized cynicism, but it can also illustrate the critical dilemma facing the artist in contemporary society. Modernism, having survived for 80 years and infiltrated (which is to say, contaminated) virtually every visual discipline, is now under attack, from the toy-town tirade of Tom Wolfe's *From Bauhaus to Our House* to Suzi Gablik's more recent *Has Modernism Failed?* Gablik (among others) claims that the avant-garde has exhausted its creativity, energy and ability to challenge our entrenched beliefs and has entered into a contract of expediency with the world of business and commodity. Culture, in other words, has become a business, with art one of its products.



Théodore Géricault
Raft of the Medusa 1818-19
Oil on canvas
193½ x 282 in.
Courtesy: Louvre, Paris

Ihor Holubizky
Montage of film stills from *Fluxes*
(1968), Arthur Lipsett

This attack on artists may result from the gap between what we expect from them, what ideas and images we are willing to consider and embrace, and how those images fit who we believe we are.

In response to the charge that "art is business," American artist Peter Halley wrote in defence of fellow painter Ross Bleckner that "their" vision of nonreferential painting was morally superior to anything that preceded it in the post-war world. Halley, who used the phrase "painting at the end of history," claimed that Bleckner, and by association Halley himself, is moved by "darker" historical events as opposed to "positivism" — the belief that technological progress provides us with a brighter, cleaner future, and with it an art-making that tacitly supports this belief.

The "dark" historical event named was the threat of nuclear war. While the issue of nuclear threat has occupied our collective consciousness since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the "end of history" cannot be fully appreciated without acknowledging the equally significant fact of 1945 — the revelation of the horrors of the Nazi extermination camps. The impact of these crucial historical events has resonated in contemporary society for more than 40 years.

That impact and its ensuing moral dilemmas have resulted in a general state of amnesia. This amnesia may be nothing more than the inability to define events and locate places. But once the centre, be it spiritual or geographic, has drifted, then everything else is cut loose. If we accept the evidence of satellite weather reports through simulations on the nightly news, we also accept the theory of plate tectonics, the physical movement of the continents, as a physical reality, even though we have no equivalent pictorial evidence of such movement. It follows that social and moral codes can drift and eventually disappear as if they were fiction or myth.

Post-war American culture (both high and popular) dismissed the past, did not confront the present and looked to a future of material comfort and leisure made possible through science and industry. The history of statesmen and leaders, events, discovery and invention, has been replaced in the post-war era by demographics, strategy and marketing — and art has reflected this. Abstract expressionists claimed a vision that owed nothing to the decayed society and destroyed history of Europe. There was no disillusionment, no despair in this art, only a bravado expressed in wide open canvases. Somewhere along the way to a future that had renounced modernism as a spent force, post- and neo- were affixed to favorite objects or ideas and *voilà* — history was invoked at will.

An artist is no longer "discovered" in New York, but "made" and "unmade," and the life and lifestyle of artists, collectors, curators and dealers have become subjects of speculation and fascination for the media. The art market is a spectator sport and the art image itself is multitasking. Using Kurt Weill's *Mack the Knife* to sell burgers is a simple turn compared to Jeff Koons' luxury artifacts that not only invoke Bernini but also co-opt Michael Jackson as pop icon cum fetish object. With this operating premise, any event or artifact can be reinterpreted and reassigned. So why not Théodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* (1819) as an image for a Club Med ad? "Could you imagine a week?"

Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* can be seen to represent painting's highest moment as historical artifact. Géricault did not record an event, the actual shipwreck, but the moment when the survivors sight a ship. The painting depicts a moment between despair and hope. Even though the accuracy of the scene can be disputed, *Raft of the Medusa* represents reportage and, since no other image of this event was possible, it becomes part of the history of events as well as the history of painting.

On the other hand, the heroic is not an issue in Picasso's *Guernica* (1937), which could be considered a modern equivalent of *Raft of the Medusa*. Images of historical events were by then the exclusive domain of the camera. Picasso was left with only one option — enlisting the modernist style in an abbreviated, anxious, cartoonlike pictorialism. *Guernica* is a generalized picture suggesting the monochromatic, low resolution of a newspaper image.

If the role of painting as reportage crumbles in the face of a Beta-cam, the attempt by some artists to reclaim social value through an appropriation of media images may just be the last gasp. Leon Golub's mercenary paintings of the 1980s, for example, claim a specific subject, but the "events" have disappeared. Golub points at all mercenaries, everywhere. Events, geography and personal identification exist only in a generalized association and are interpreted through the low-resolution haze of television. "This work is about mercenaries. Oh...let me guess...you're against them."

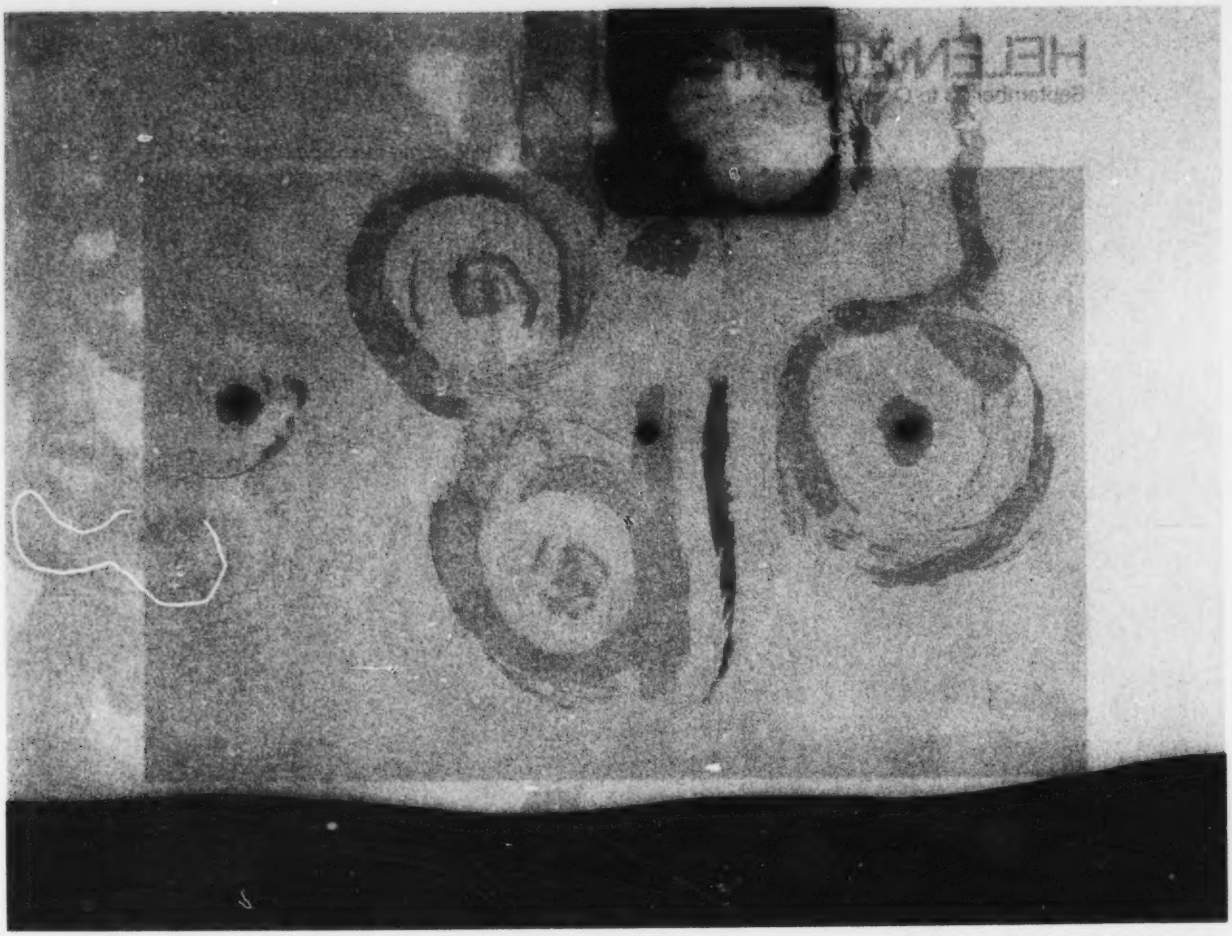
Film has inherited the role of reportage, not only through the documentary format but through cleverly constructed and convincing visions of the past, present and possible futures. Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Stangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, made in 1963, was not the first film to deal with the consequences of a post-nuclear holocaust future, but it was the first to do so clearly in the present tense. And instead of history in the making, the title suggests something Freudian and fatalistic.

Canadian filmmaker Arthur Lipsett constructed a different scenario for the future of the species. His 28-minute film *Fluxes*, made in 1967, used primarily stock footage and audio tracks. Lipsett assembled a torrent of images and sound that bristled with irony, humor and shock. In one sequence, the sound was lifted from a '50s science fiction film: "We came to your planet for protein. Our only morality is survival." The dialogue is highlighted by the juxtaposition of footage from Adolf Eichmann's war crimes trial.

Lipsett was not unaware of the seriousness of the images or the implications of his manipulation, but through a devastatingly simple device he acknowledged not only that the course of events was no longer dictated by moral action but also that all images and information could be juxtaposed at will. *Fluxes* was not a precursor of postmodernism; it inadvertently announced the post-historical. The fetish of recording everything from nuance to disaster provided Lipsett with a readymade source for his 20th-century time capsule, offering future generations the opportunity to decipher our actions or collective madness.

The allure of time travel, the possibility of being a free and fluid agent within historic and geographic place, has found a niche in this century's fiction. In the most recent variation, a television series entitled *Quantum Leap*, the main character is the victim of a scientific experiment gone awry. Although he has no control over the time period or geographic destination, there is, according to the premise, some guiding rationale — a mission he is obliged to fulfill. In one episode, he is transported to a small town, there to prevent a potentially tragic marriage between high-school sweethearts. The inconceivable task of altering the course of events — preventing war and disaster — resembles a classic episode of *Twilight Zone*. Quantum leap indeed. This character is fated to drift through a banal time and space.

When New York artist Robert Longo can announce the belief that his art "can have global impact to change the world," the result may be a fate similar to our *Quantum* time traveller. *Raft of the Medusa* is treated as a picture and not a social document. The same can be said for *Guernica*, and given time, Leon Golub's mercenary paintings. Longo's claim may come to pass, but in a future without history, will the world (or even the art world) notice?



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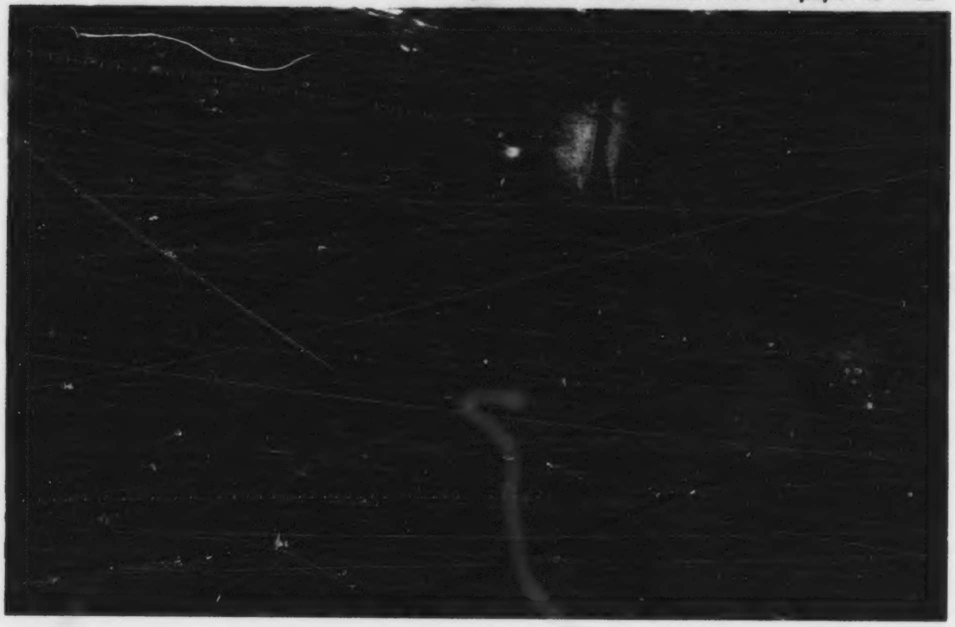

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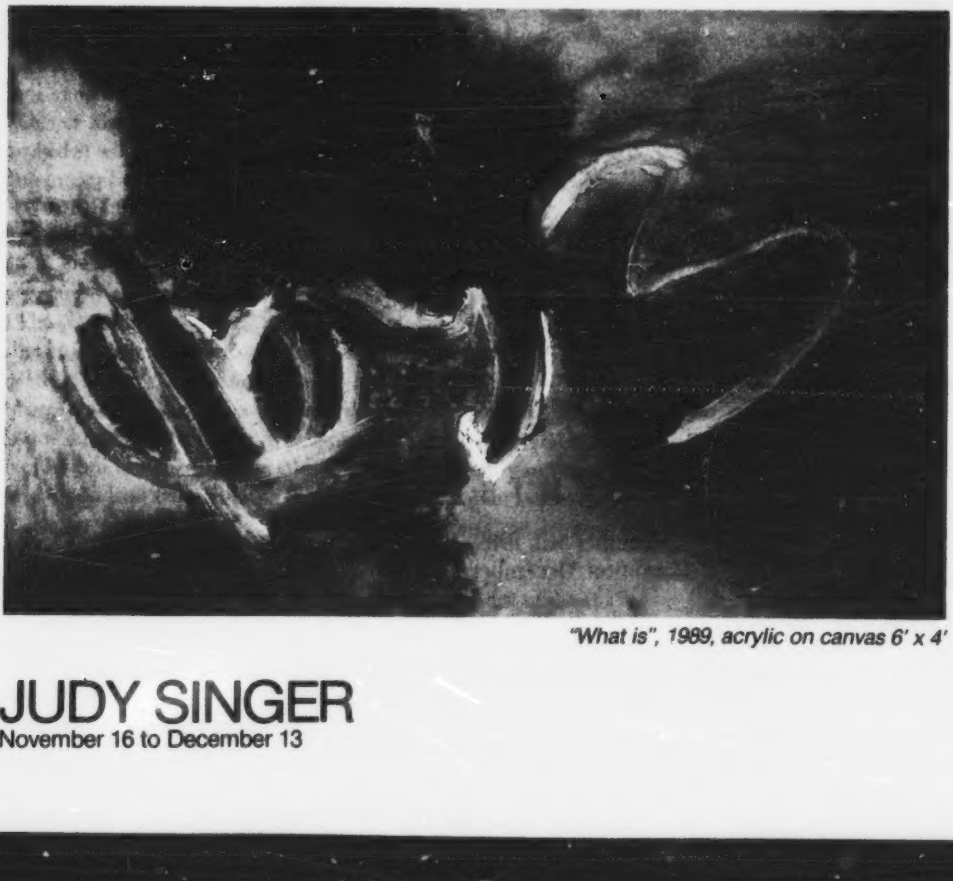

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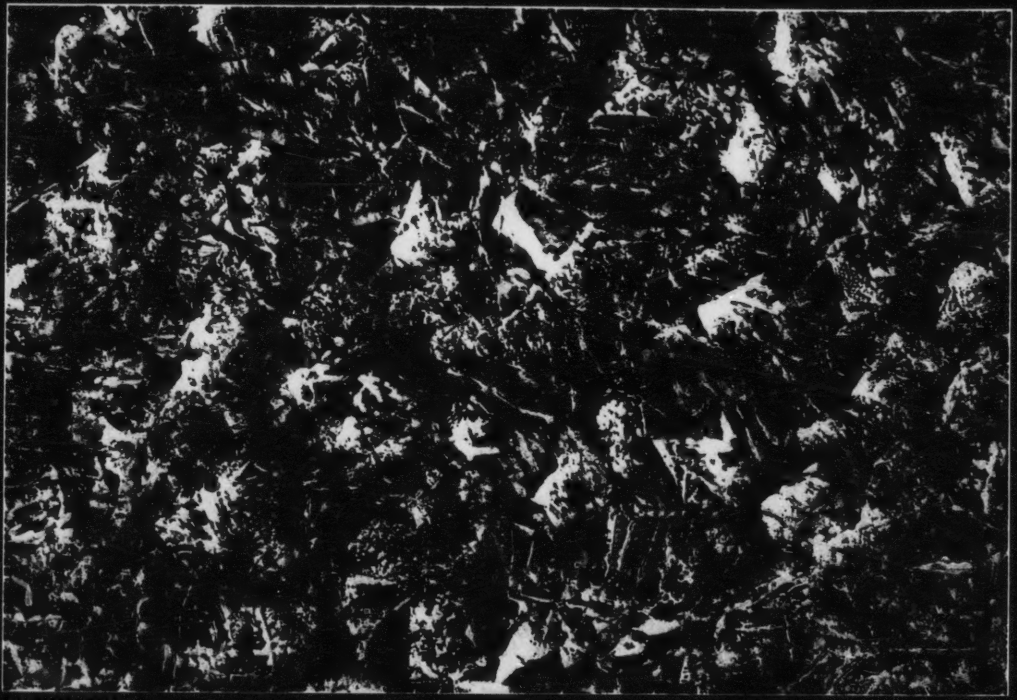

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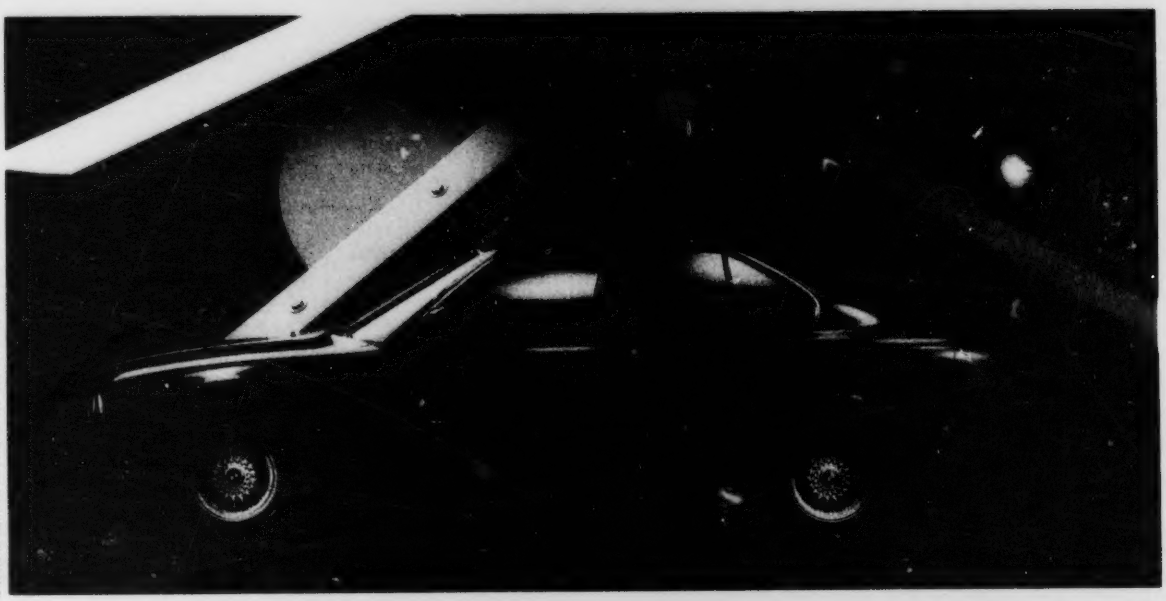
SERIES 5



*Performance claim based on test of 535i shown

It has been said that the last great adventures still awaiting us are to be found only in the boardroom. While there may be much truth in this, there is a different kind of adventure that some find only on the open road.

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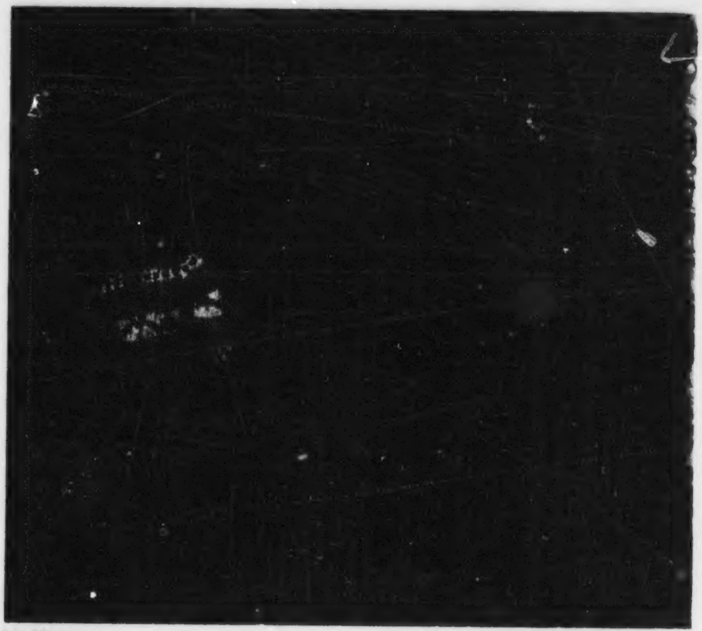
CANADIAN BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART



Liz Magor
Detail of *Child's Sweater, c. 1970* (1989)

Photo: Alex Neumann

On view at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa from 6 October to 3 December 1989

A major survey of Canadian contemporary art including works by 25 participating artists from across the country.

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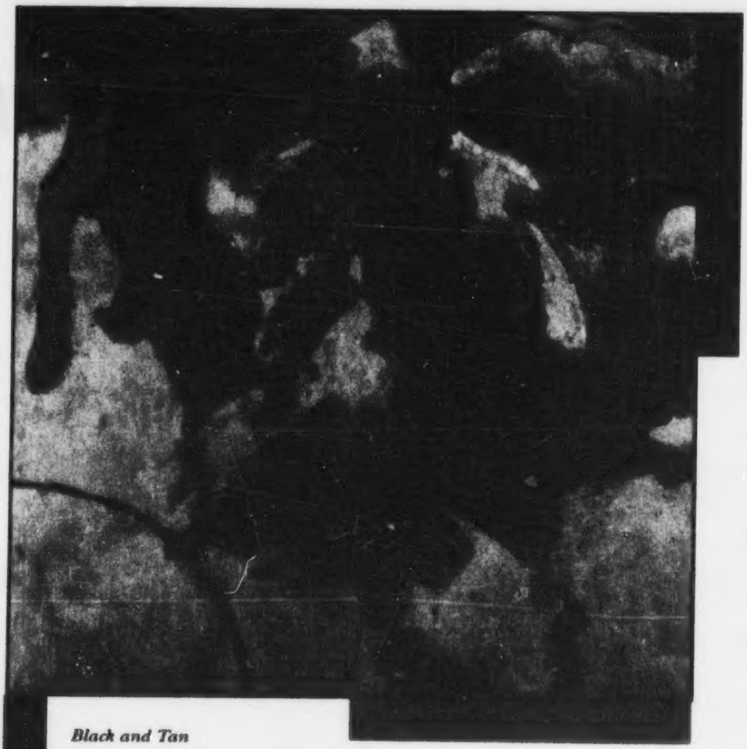

Black and Tan
45 X 44 inches
oil on canvas
1989

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DONALD A. SMITH
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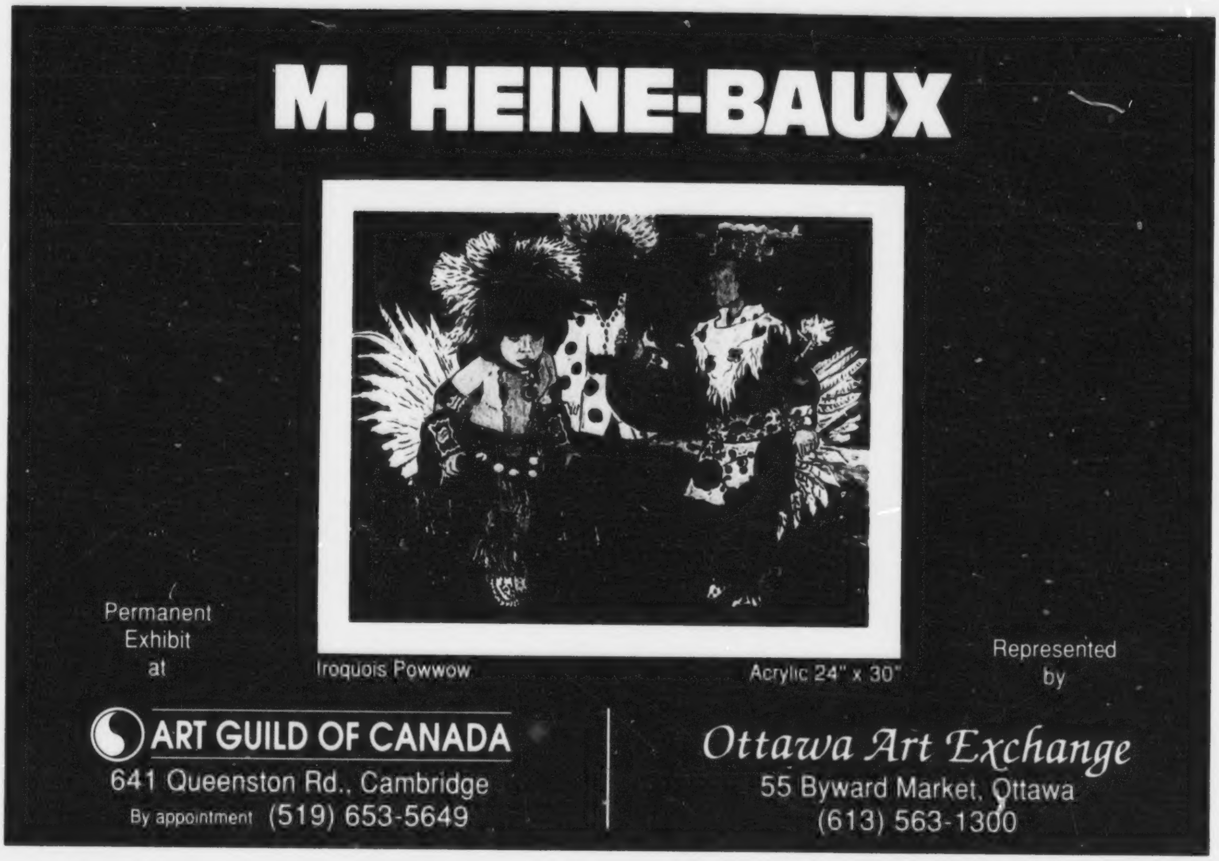

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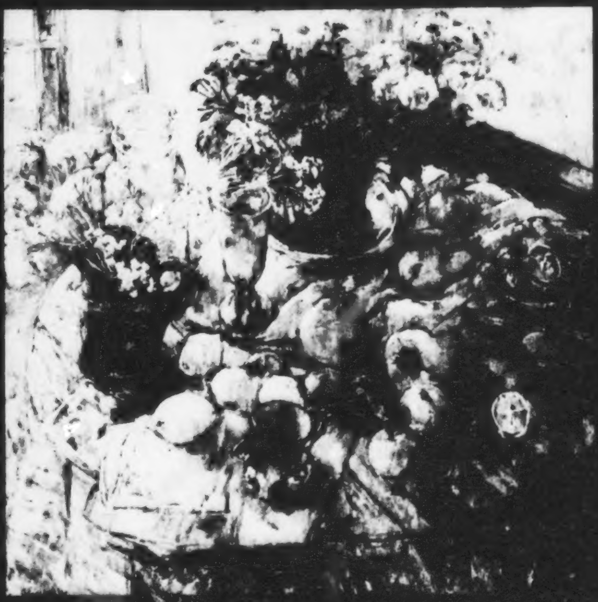
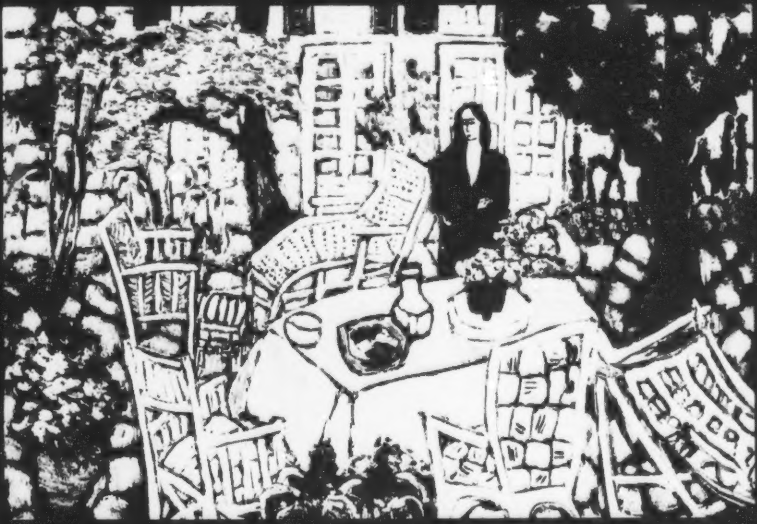
'THE APPLE' Egg Tempera

EXHIBITIONS:
FALL
1989

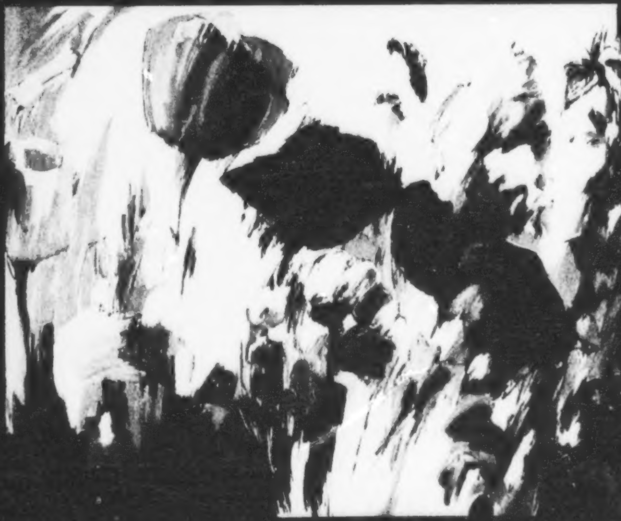
Preview and Sale



Charlotte Mensforth



Monique Harvey



Madeleine Lemire

Bruno Cote
from Wed., Sept. 6

CHARLOTTE MENSFORTH
from Wed., Sept., 20

Hugh Cunningham (Sculpture)
from Wed., Sept. 20

Allen Sapp R.C.A.
from Wed., Oct. 11

MONIQUE HARVEY
from Wed., Nov. 1

Gino Hollander
from Wed., Nov. 15

MADELEINE LEMIRE
from Wed., Nov. 29

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Timmins Museum:
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Nepean Civic Square
Atrium Gallery

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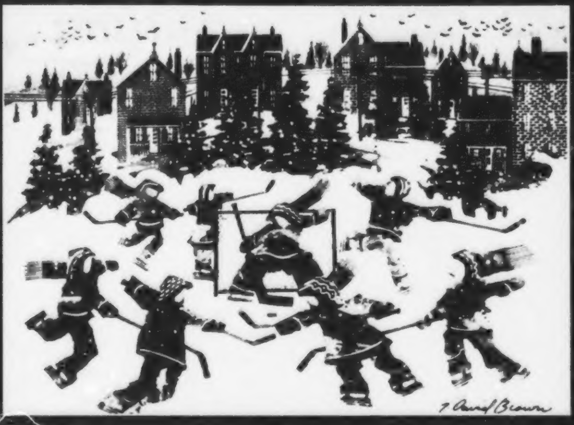

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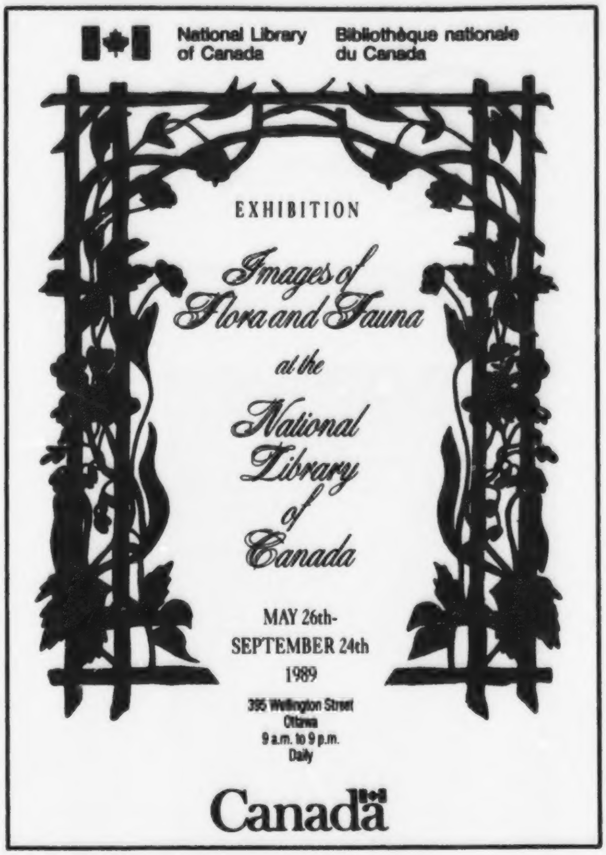

National Library of Canada
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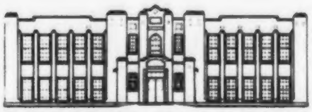
EXHIBITION

Images of Flora and Fauna at the National Library of Canada

MAY 26th-
SEPTEMBER 24th
1989

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa
9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Daily

Canada



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MUST HAVE:
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Personnel Committee
Prairie Gallery
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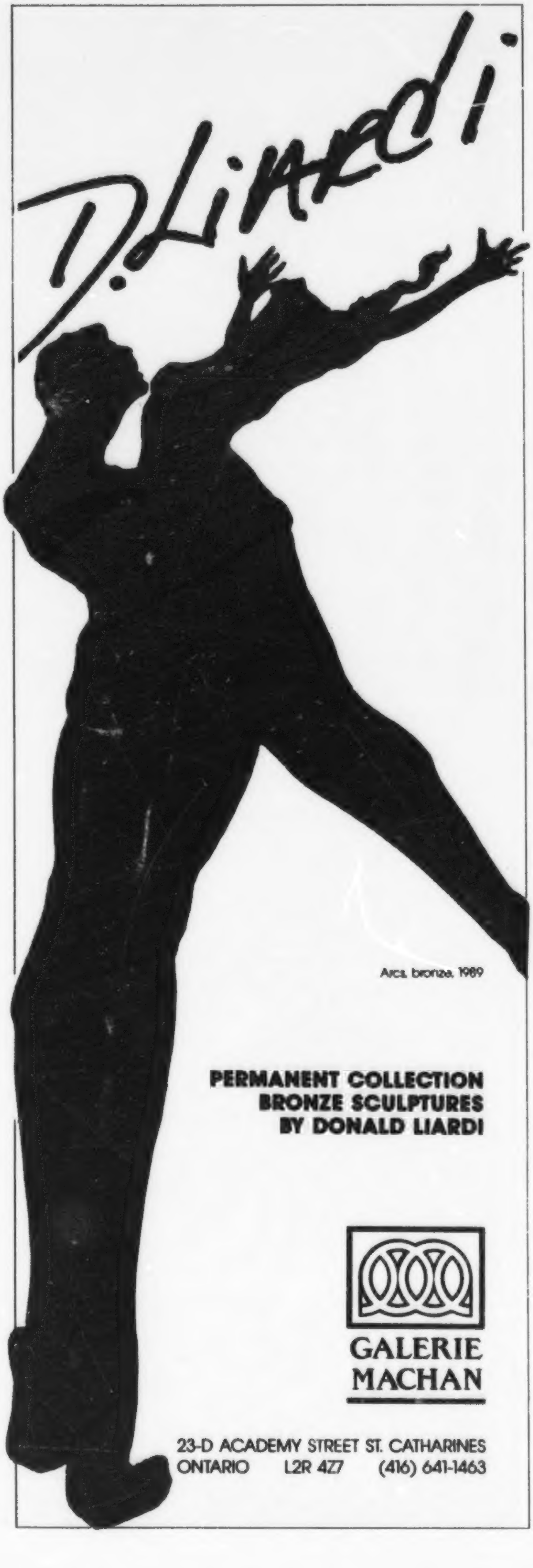
T8V 2H3

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:
- September 30, 1989



Arcs, bronze, 1989

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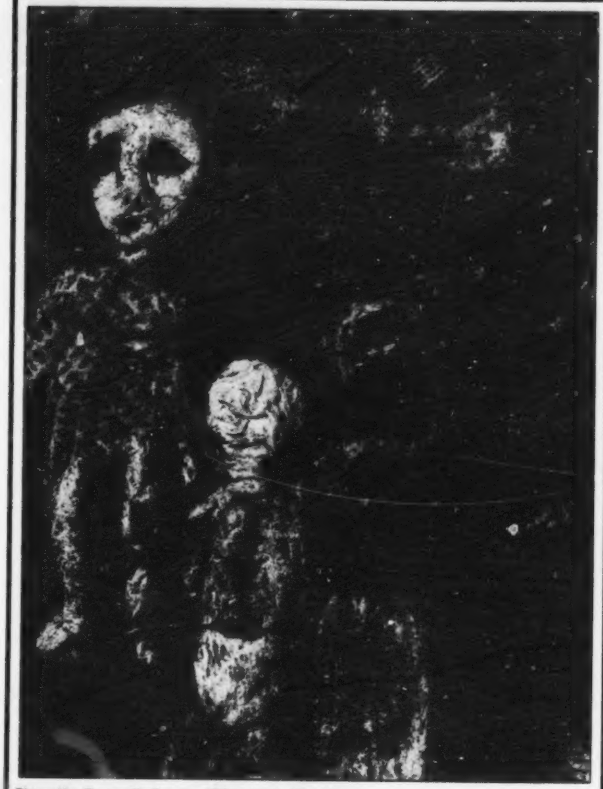

Pierrette Gonseth-Favre "Témoins" 80 x 60cm.

Pierrette Gonseth-Favre
October 4–21

Bert Weir
October 26–November 11

Claire Kerwin
November 16–December 2

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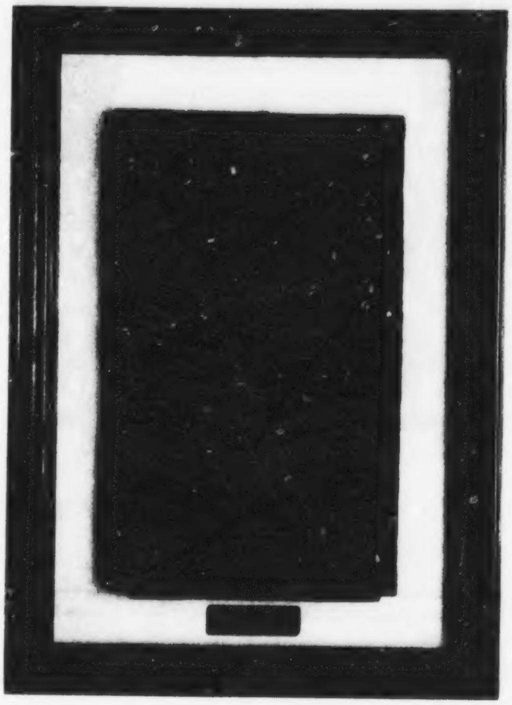
Renoir



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at the Art Gallery of Ontario

Perspective 89:
Roy Arden and Dominique Blain
September 16–November 12, 1989
Made possibie by an annual gift
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Ulrike Rosenbach
September 20–November 12, 1989
Supported by the Canada Council
Presented in conjunction with the
Art Gallery of York University

Paintings on Paper
Works by eleven contemporary
German artists
September 28–November 12, 1989

Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak:
Collaborations
N[illegible] January 1[illegible]

AGO

317 Dundas Street West
Toronto, Canada M5T 1G4
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Aspects of Power

September 23 – October [illegible]

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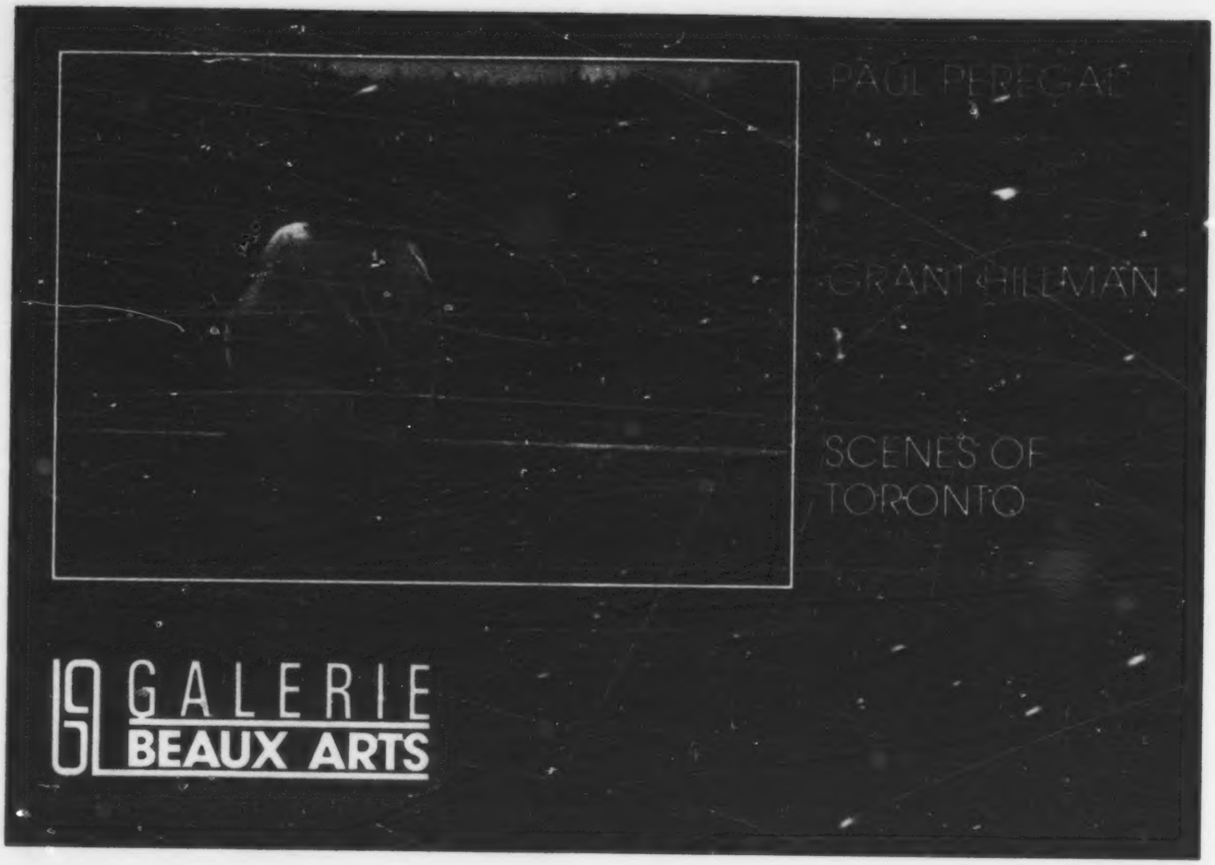

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Steve Rockwell
August 26-September 12
The Steve Rockwell
Sandwich Show

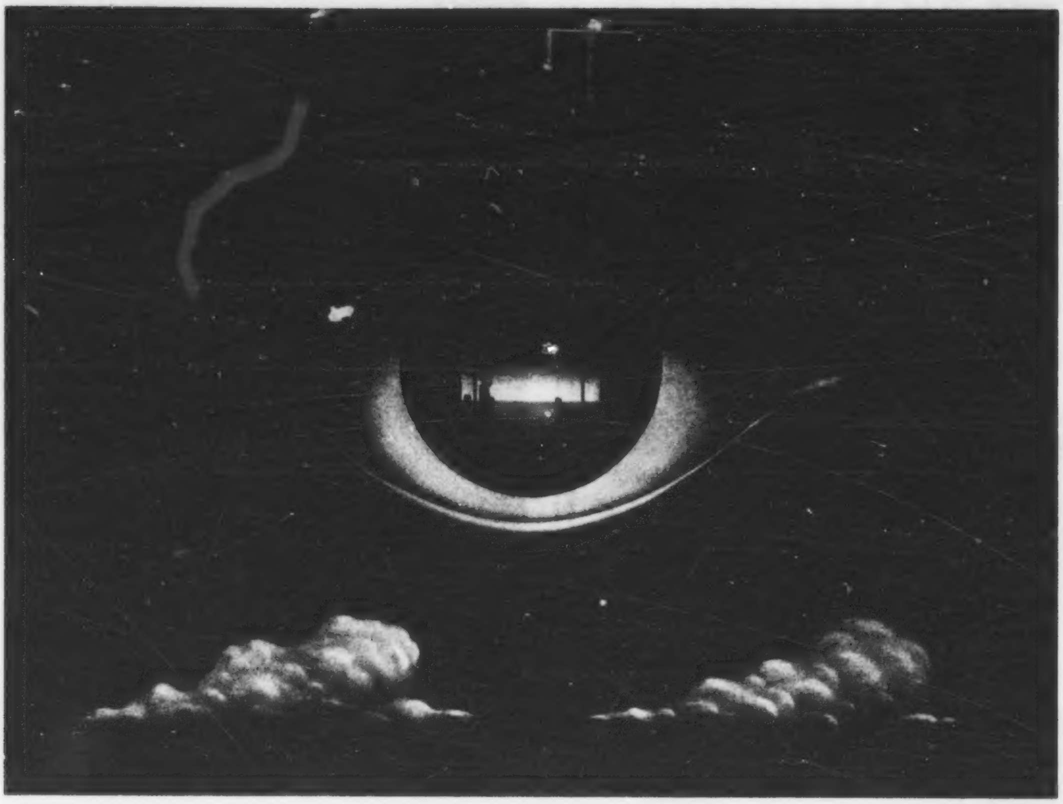
Russian Posters
August 29-September 12
Perestroika and Glasnost

Gordon McNamara
September 14-October 4
Works on Paper

Suzanna Samanek
October 7-November 1
Recent Painting:
Hungry Dogs

Scott McDermid
November 4-November 25
More Paint

Algis Kemezys
December 2-January 1
Altered Photographs



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David Gerstein - Sculpture and reliefs	October 16
Henry Moore -	November 15

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GALERIE ROCHON

Alison Dunlop - Watercolours	September 23
Pnina Granirer - Watercolours	October 21
Mila Armata - Oil Paintings	November 18

GALLERY 306

Dennis Moss -	September
C. Ruddock, T. Rasky -	October
M. Ludwig, D. Brown, - **J. di Leonardo**	November

MIDWAY FORUM GALLERY

Sylvat Aziz - "Islamic Woman"	Fall Shows
International Invitation Show - "Long Live Death"	

NEO FABER GALLERY

Jonathan Levin / **John Robinson**	September
Gary Mc Fadyen - Sculpture	October 21
Peter Zips - Sculpture	November 11

THE SITUATION

Milena Dragicevic - "New Works"	October
Patricia Vertes-Brophy - **& Francis Collins -**	
G. Georgis - Metaphysical Painting	November

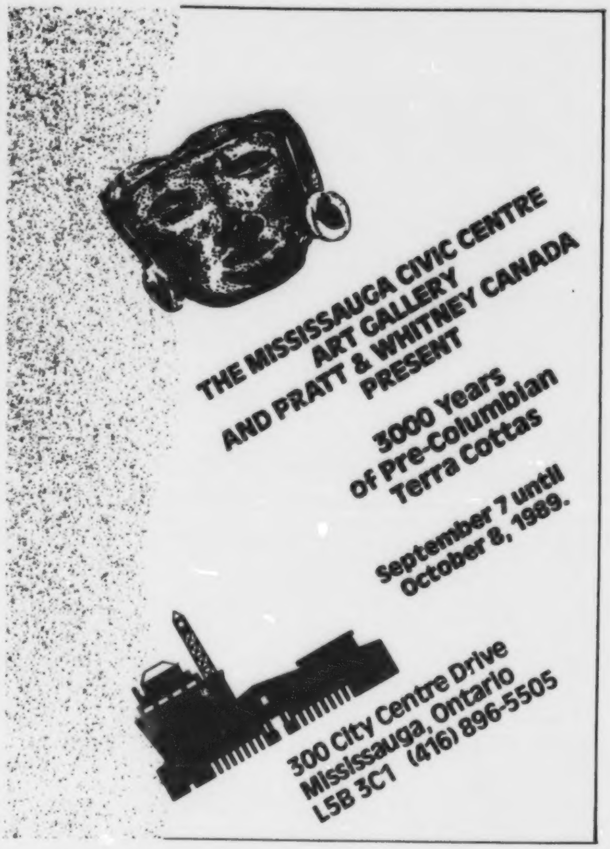
TOTAL ART GALLERY

Representing: **R. Sobek, M Horton, C. Meyers, D. Ambroise, M. Cavanaugh, P. Beckett, T.Y. Kwack, S.K. Lee, E. Lewarne, F. Smyth**	Fall Show

TORONTO IMAGE WORKS

Mark Hamilton - Contemporary Photography	September 9 to October 20
"Images of Poland"	October 21 to November 17

80 SPADINA AVENUE, TORONTO



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[illegible]

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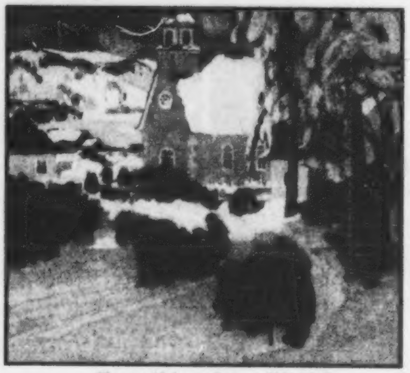

MARIA CHAPDELAINE
October 15, 1989,
through
January 7, 1990.

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Derek Root	Sept. 30 – Oct. 18
Mary Balomenos	Oct. 21 – Nov. 8
John Koerner	November 9 – 28
V. Marshall, P. Raphanel, D. Walker	December 2 – 23
Graham Gillmore	January 13 – 31
Attila Richard Lukacs	February 3 – 28
Paul Kuhn	March 3 – 21
Neil Wedman	March 24 – April 11
Malcolm Rains	April 11 – May 2
David Walker	May 5 – 23
Gloria Massé	May 26 – June 13

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SUZIE LAKE
Photographs
September 7 to 24

DAVID TOLLEY
Sculptures
September 28
to October 15

REGINE LHERITIER
Paintings
October 19
to November 5

CATHERINE WIDGERY
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November 9 to 26

Catherine Widgery, Whale Boat, 1987, Linen, wood, steel, 32 x 87 x 36 in

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Zev Robinson
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Judy Matthews
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EXHIBITIONS

Release of **"Vallee Guide II"**
Sept. 14th at 7 p.m. (100 works represented in the Guide will be exhibited from Sept. 14th till Oct. 1st)

Nérée De Grâce
From Oct. 4th till Oct. 15th

Léon Bellefleur
From Oct. 25th till Nov. 12th

Jean-Pierre Lafrance
From Nov. 15th till Nov. 26th

Small size paintings
From Nov. 29th till Dec. 23rd

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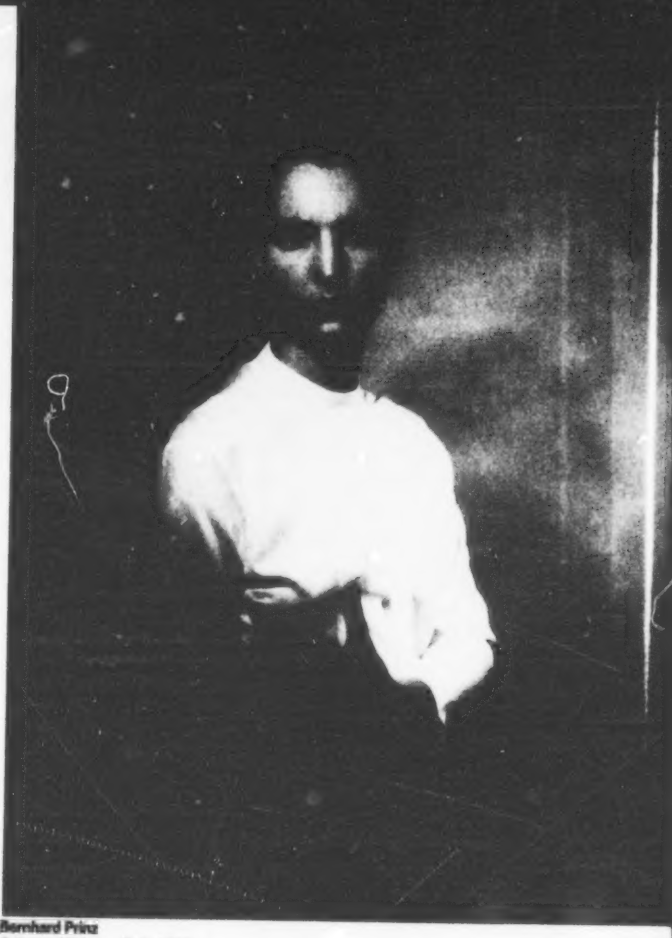
fast forward

A cross-Canada checkup of people and events in the arts

Compiled by SARAH MILROY



Bernhard Prinz
Schwarz-Weiss re. Seite 1986
Cibachrome photograph
45 x 69 in.

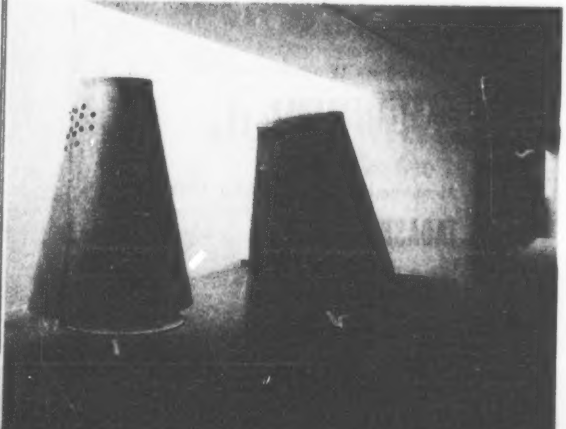
For many, contemporary German art, which has occupied the centre of the international stage since the late 1970s, is both problematic and compelling. Germany's history in the 20th century has been a tragic accommodation to modernity. Recent concerns about how art can or cannot address history are especially strong in a country where the past is a contaminated zone and the debate about history has become one about identity. The success of the economic miracle — or the Americanization of West Germany — makes the situation of contemporary Germany, of all the European countries, closest to our own. The handwringing about national identity is familiar to Canadians, and the discomfort and disorder caused by the dominance of commercial values is a feature of both societies.

This autumn Toronto's Power Plant (from September 22 to November 12) and Montreal's Musée d'art contemporain (from September 13 to January 14) mount large exhibitions examining developments in postwar German art. Neither exhibition includes the painters who were so celebrated in the '70s and '80s: Baselitz, Kiefer, Immendorf and Penck. Instead, both exhibitions place a major emphasis on photo-based work, as important an aspect of German art today as it is of Canadian.

The Musée d'art contemporain exhibition is called *Blickpunkte*, which roughly translates as "viewpoints." Manon Blanchette and Berlin critic Wolfgang Max Faust have focussed on work that has its roots in conceptualism. Joseph Beuys is on their list, of course; postwar German art is inconceivable without the man who taught two generations of German artists and who began the project of reclaiming the past. International luminaries such as Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter and Imi Knoebel are included with younger artists like Rosemarie Trockel and Thomas Schütte. The generation that held together Germany's minimalist and conceptual scene in the '60s is represented by Hanne Darboven, Franz Erhard Walther and Ulrich Ruckriem. (In this vein, conceptual performance and video artist Ulrike Rosenbach will be showing work and performing at the York University Art Gallery in Toronto from September 6 to October 1. Concurrently the Art Gallery of Ontario is exhibiting her video work as well as hosting a performance.) Young iconoclasts like Giri George Dokoupil and Walter Dahn are also included in the Montreal show. Five artists who will show installations at the Musée are Rebecca Horn, Marcel Odenbach, Lothar Baumgarten, Thomas Schütte and Jochen Gerz. A strong video and multidisciplinary component is also planned.

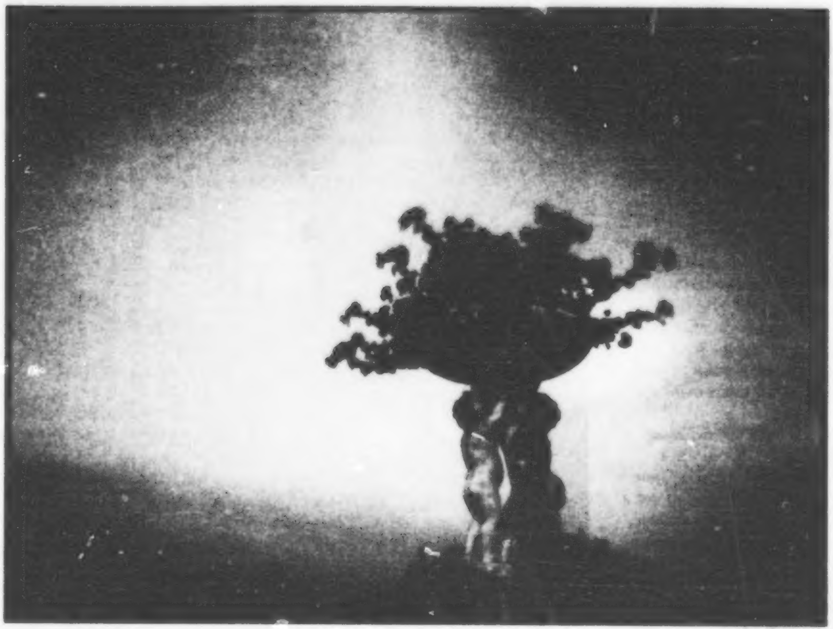
If the Montreal show represents Germany's "A" list, The Power Plant's *In Between and Beyond — From Germany* features a younger group of artists whose work was chosen in order to highlight strategic and thematic interrelations. Even so, there is some crossover: Astrid Klein, Bogomir Ecker and Olaf Metzel appear in both the Toronto and Montreal exhibitions. Metzel's pile of oversized police barricades topped with a giant shopping cart was the most successful and controversial of Berlin's 1987 sculpture show. Ecker along with Heike Pallanca and Wolfgang Robbe are doing special installations for The Power Plant. Louise Dompierre, who is curating the exhibition, has assembled work that refers directly or allegorically to the public function of art and its historical use. *Scott Watson*

Bogomir Ecker
Zwei drie vier — eins nach zwei 1986
Sheet metal, paint, polychrome vinyl
75 x 48 x 55 in.
75 x 53 x 55 in.

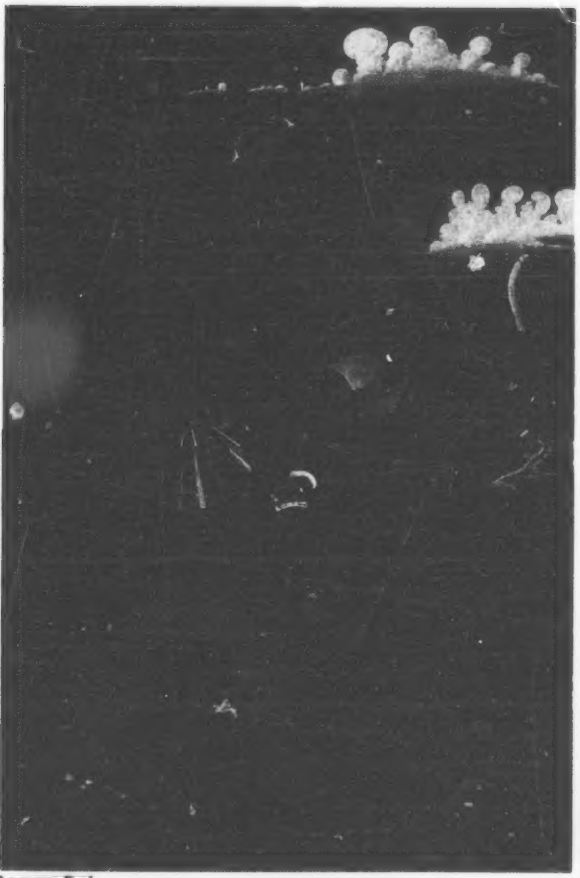


Astrid Klein
Verführung-Sklaverei V. 1988
Black and white photograph
51 x 77 in.

An exhibition of works by Canadian photographer Ian Paterson will open in October at the Musée Carnavalet in Paris, France. Though Paterson has been teaching drawing at the Parsons School of Design in Paris for six years, his real labour of love during the same period has taken place in the sunny, bleak, magnificent, moody, and always entrancing Luxembourg Gardens. Using a homemade pinhole camera to patiently record different views of the gardens (including one time-exposed shot that Samuel Beckett invisibly walked through), Paterson has exhibited the results at various galleries in Europe and Canada, including a one-man show at the Centre Georges Pompidou. The fall exhibition is in celebration of the 150th anniversary of photography and a book of Paterson's work will accompany the show. The exhibition will travel to other European galleries after the Paris show, with plans to bring the Luxembourg photographs to Canada in spring, 1990. *Ellen Vanstone*



Ian Paterson
Luxembourg Gardens mid-1980s
Black and white pinhole camera photograph
7 x 5 in.



Laurence Paul
Leaving My Reservation, Going to Ottawa c.1986
Acrylic on canvas
70 x 98 in.

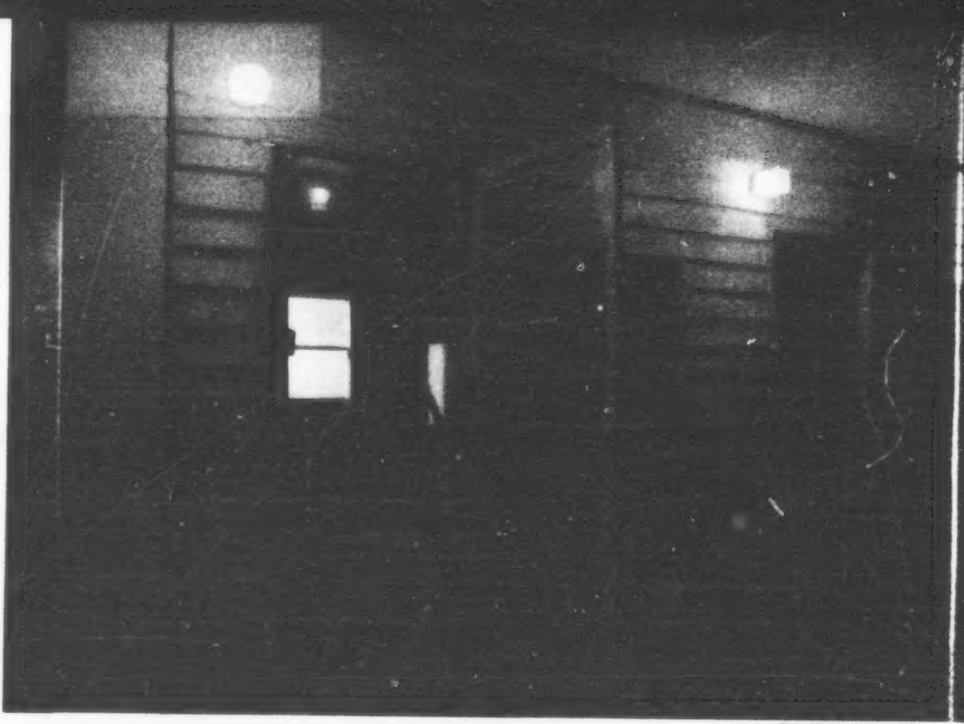
Last year, artist Claudine Pommier assembled artists, funding and volunteers to produce *Fear Of Others: Art Against Racism*, an exhibition filling five Vancouver spaces with artwork by 74 artists, much of it specifically conceived for this event. Miraculously, it was achieved with only three months' preparation.

Committed, determined and undaunted by the amount of time and energy one must devote to such projects, Pommier is at it again, organizing a second *Fear Of Others/In Search Of Tolerance, Art Against Racism* exhibition (September 23 to October 22). This time more than 300 artists as well as dozens of school children are involved. And as if that weren't enough, the exhibition will be accompanied by poetry readings, performance art, video, music, panel discussions and an ongoing mural project spanning the four weeks.

"We are looking at racism as an expression of power," says Pommier. As such, she expects the art will address not only the more obvious emanations of racism that greet us daily through the news media, but will also mine the more insidious, underlying ones that are perhaps not recognized. With works arriving from such faraway places as Senegal, Iran, Argentina, Japan, India, Israel, France and El Salvador, as well as all across Canada and the U.S.A., concerns about racism from around the world will descend upon Vancouver to meet those that lurk within our own backyards.

Among those taking part are some familiar names — Judy Chicago, Robert Colescott, Leon Golub, Nancy Spero, Klaus Staeck and Jeff Wall — but Pommier is quick to point out that lesser-known voices make up the bulk of the exhibition, and will in the end speak the loudest, often from experience.

This year three venues have been secured — the CPR Roundhouse on the old Expo site, the Vancouver Community Arts Council Gallery, and the Vancouver East Cultural Centre — three very different spaces in three different neighborhoods with the ultimate goal of reaching different audiences for maximum impact. *Keith Wallace*



Rita McKeough
Heave 1988
Mixed media installation, including soundtrack
30 x 40 ft.
Photo: David Lazarowich

Rita McKeough's constructed environments are moving and, for some, even cathartic experiences. Since 1981 she has made a dozen, each remarkable for its detailed creation of an engrossing interior world. Her attention to the violence within human relationships can touch everyone.

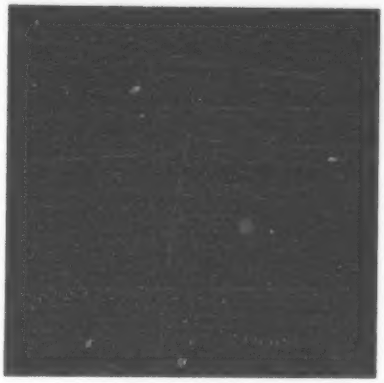
The earlier works showed scaled-down houses and forecast social and ecological crises in a development-blighted urban future. Then the single-family house became a metaphor for memory and the body, and McKeough invited us inside to listen to the disembodied voices of inhabitants.

The pivotal work was *Retaining Wall* (1986). If this house was a prison for people locked in separate psychological rooms, it also offered a sentence commuted by the dialogue between a woman and a man within the battered walls of the back room.

Language and sound have been animating elements of McKeough's work since *Defunct* (1981). The minimal dialogue in *Retaining Wall* took shape in *An Exchange Within* (1987) and became explicitly focussed on abused women in *Blind Spot* (1987), *Mimicry* (1988) and *Heave* (1988).

Breaking the isolation of inflicted pain by learning to speak it out loud and, by speaking, to forge an identity freed from the past, is the crux of *Tremor*, McKeough's current installation at Regina's Dunlop Art Gallery (September 9 to October 7).

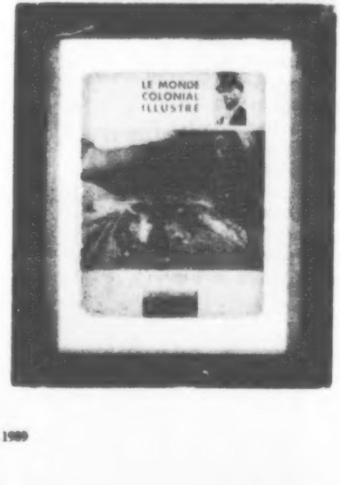
The emphasis is now on speech, the room as an objectification of the body's interior and the history of a woman. "It's often through silence that we harm ourselves and others," says McKeough. "*Tremor* is about a tremor of voice, a tremor of speech as the voice erupts, a tremor of the body in remembering pain." It's also an optimistic work, as what begins with a shudder finds its strength.
Nancy Tousley

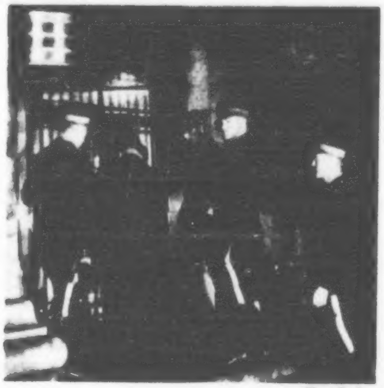


The *Perspective '89* series at the Art Gallery of Ontario is a relatively new tradition started by George Gilmour, a former president of the board of directors, who stipulated that this Annual Awards Exhibition for Contemporary Canadian Art (with a total of $1,000 in prizes) should be given to artists not over 35. *Perspective '89* (September 15 to November 12) is the fifth installment in the series. In the past, the exhibition has showcased Stan Douglas, Fastwürms, Nancy Johnson, Will Gorlitz, Carol Wainio and Robert Wiens. This year curator Michèle Thériault has chosen Dominique Blain from Montreal and Roy Arden from Vancouver.

This coupling of two artists who live 4,800 kilometres apart seems to throw some light on the nature of the Canadian scene — a culture of constant minute differences and overall striking similarities. Blain is a woman who speaks French and makes small objects and sculptural installations; Arden is a man who speaks English and who makes installations and large wall pieces only. Yet both work with appropriated images (images from magazines and print in the case of Blain; archival material with Arden) and have similar themes: the alienation (Arden) and objectification (Blain) of the subject; photographic material taken from the past (pointing to specific historical events in the case of Arden; used in a more generalized way by Blain). Finally, both make works that recall formalist and minimalist aesthetics, but use them to deal with socially charged issues such as colonialism and racism.
Serge Bérard

Dominique Blain
Le Monde Coloniale, Illustre #2 1987
Mixed media
23 x 20 in.
Collection: Marc Garneau, Montreal

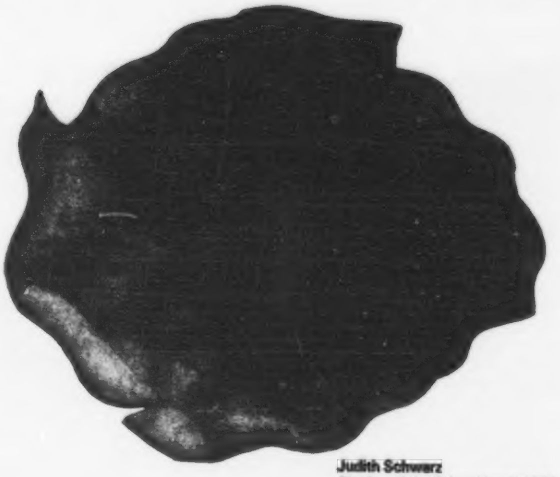




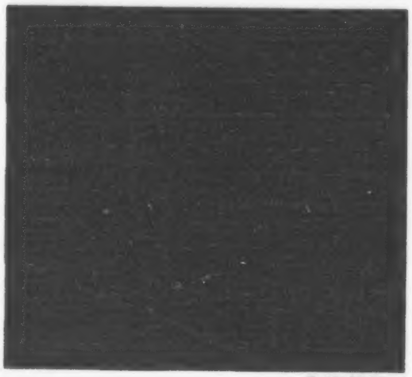
Roy Arden
Rupture 1985
Cibachrome and gelatin silver print
Nine diptych panels, 27 x 16 in. each
Photo: Jim Jardine
Collection: Art Gallery of Ontario

Judith Schwarz's art rides a fine line. At its weakest, her work can look too much like design and not enough like art — a kind of Pebbles and BamBam postmodern biomorphism. But at its best — and this is most of the time — it has a grace of execution, deftness with materials and declarative simplicity that make it a pleasure to behold. Schwarz's particular interest is the interplay of natural and man-made forms and materials — a kind of cross-pollination of Richard Deacon and Mia Westerlund Roosen. Steel mates with wood, metal is transformed into inky shadow (at least in the mind's eye) and the dialogue between nature and technology is laid out in a poetic 3-D.

At the Art Gallery of Windsor, senior curator Grant Arnold sees Schwarz as one of Canada's most underrated sculptors, and this fall he's doing something about it. *Judith Schwarz*, on show from November 25 to January 7, brings together her recent sculptures and installations, including a new work made for the Windsor show. Among the exhibited works is Schwarz's *Parallel Language* (1987), a large installation that furthers her investigation of natural versus industrial forms. Says Arnold, "There are really two issues that interest me in her work. The first is her use of materials: a lot of sculpture has really drifted away from any sense of craft toward pure idea. Also, she has a very strong sense of the history of sculptural vocabulary; on the one hand, she refers to minimalist sculpture, but she also has ties to surrealism. She's much more romantic and intuitive." *Sarah Milroy*



Judith Schwarz
Shadow of the Palace (detail) 1986
Concrete, steel
66 in. diam. x 42 in. high
Photo: Isaac Applebaum



Guido Molinari
Opposition Rectangulaire 1961
Acrylic on canvas
45 x 41 in.
Photo: Grant Kenan
Collection: MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina

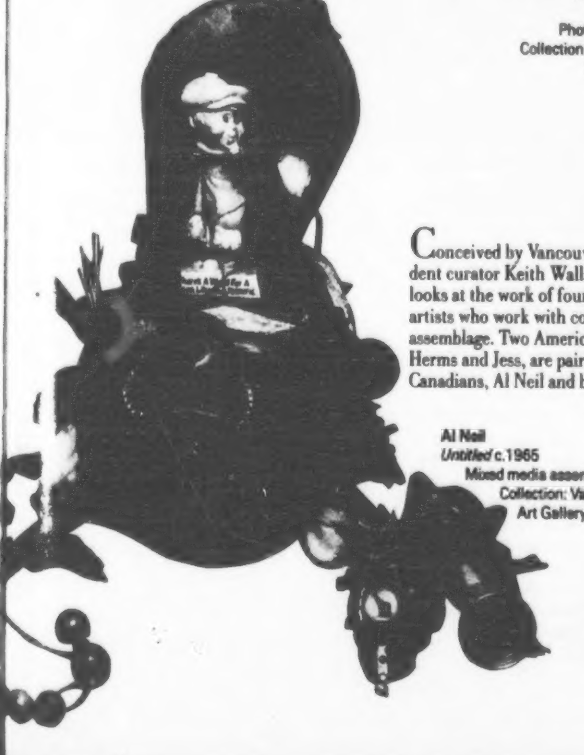
When the New York art world descended on a tranquil artists' colony in northern Saskatchewan — circa 1960 — it had all the makings of a historic event. The Emma Lake Artists' Workshops, led by such visiting dignitaries as Barnett Newman, Clement Greenberg, Kenneth Noland and Jules Olitski, developed a reputation for abstract expressionist work, giving the isolated Saskatchewan art community a much needed — if borrowed — identity.

Now a long overdue Emma Lake retrospective at Saskatoon's Mendel Art Gallery runs from October 12 to November 19. Entitled *The Flat Side of the Landscape*, it features work from five pivotal workshops, visited by such artists as Guido Molinari, held at the retreat between 1955 and 1979.

The inaugural workshop was led by B.C. painter Jack Shadbolt. The idea — to give local artists a chance to work with leading art figures — proved so successful that by 1959 the organizers looked to New York. John O'Brian, guest curator of the Mendel retrospective, describes Barnett Newman's visit that year as catalytic.

"Newman persuaded the future Regina Five [abstract painters Arthur McKay, Kenneth Lochhead, Ronald Bloore, Ted Godwin and Douglas Morton] that what they were doing stood up to the best of New York. He gave them a group identity." But the clincher came in 1962 with the arrival of the influential art critic Clement Greenberg. Something of a spiritual godfather to participants, Greenberg included Regina artists Lochhead and McKay in his 1964 *Post-Painterly Abstraction* exhibit in Los Angeles. But his continued involvement with the community led to criticisms that New York aesthetics had no place on the prairies.

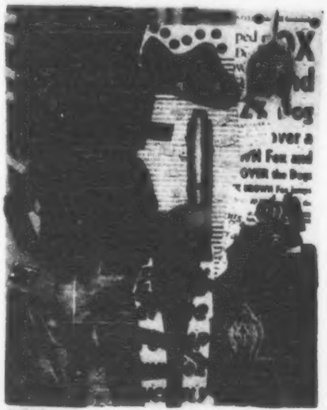
Today, the workshops remain rooted in the modernist views that once gave them an edge, leading some obervers to dismiss Emma Lake as an anachronism. But, argues O'Brian, Emma Lake was a "modernist phenomenon" in Canadian history. As such, it deserves attention. The exhibition travels from Saskatoon to Edmonton, Vancouver and Windsor.
Maya Gallus



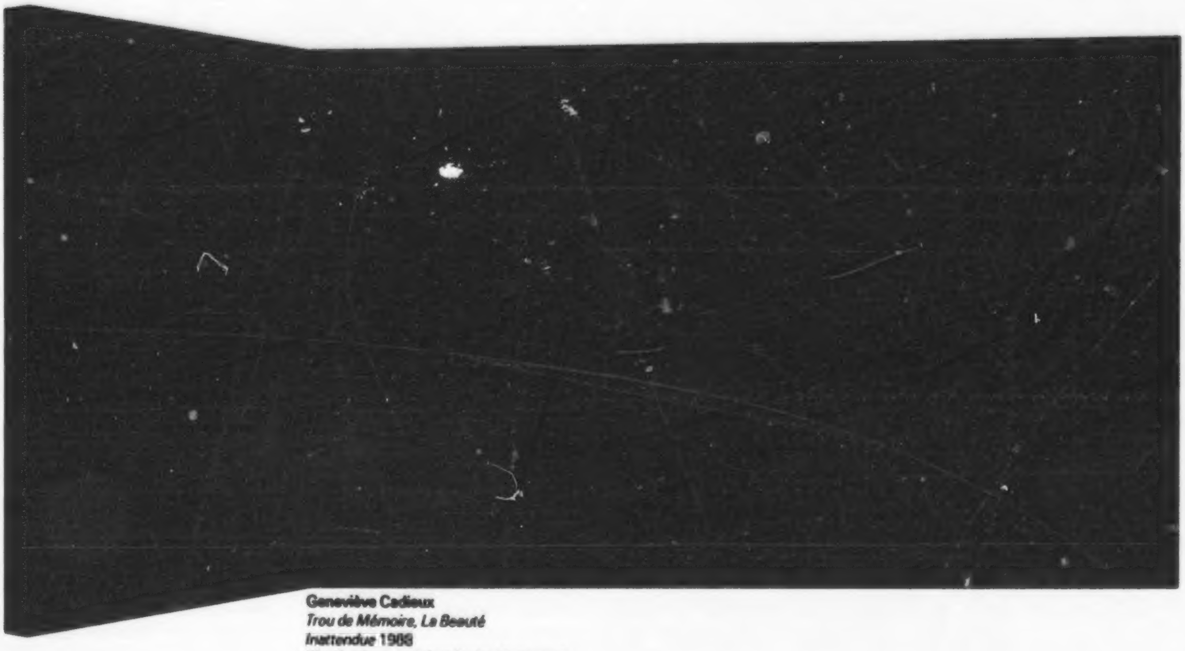
Al Neil
Untitled c.1965
Mixed media assemblage
Collection: Vancouver Art Gallery

Conceived by Vancouver independent curator Keith Wallace, *Rezoning* looks at the work of four West Coast artists who work with collage and assemblage. Two Americans, George Herms and Jess, are paired with two Canadians, Al Neil and bill bissett, all of them sharing strong connections to poets and poetry. As well, they share an interest in idiosyncratic cosmologies and a tender regard for discarded objects. The show will cover three-and-a-half decades, examining the origin of West Coast collage and assemblage in the Beat movement and its permutations on dada and surrealist traditions.

Wallace sees this work as the product of the distinct cultural difference that characterizes the West Coast from Vancouver to California. His exhibition maps out a nonconformist art of protest that explores spiritual and imaginative potentials as alternative measures of reality.
Scott Watson

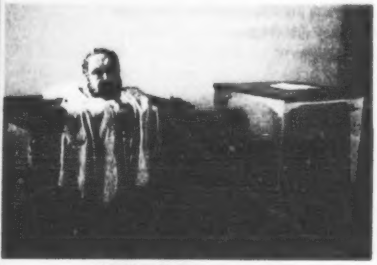


bill bissett
Messenger Among Barking Dogs 1984
Collage
10 x 13 in.



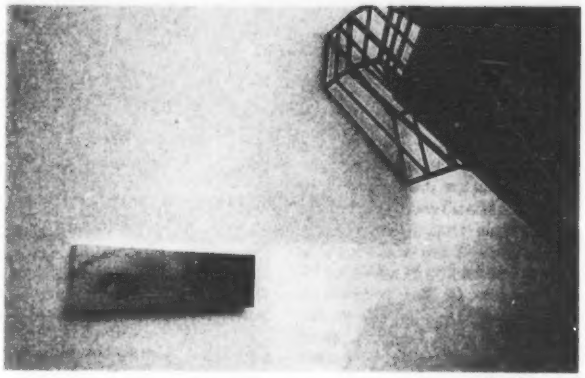
Geneviève Cadieux
Trou de Mémoire, La Beauté
Inattendue 1988
Wood, mirror, metal and color photograph
186 x 82 x 5 ½ in.

The good news, for those who have long lamented the dearth of opportunities to view contemporary art in Canada, is that the National Gallery's *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art* is back this fall after an absence of 21 years. The bad news for the burgeoning arts community is that few artists have been called upon and even fewer chosen: 25 compared with as many as 90 in the past. The burden of choice — and inevitable criticism — rests on the shoulders of Diana Nemiroff, the National's curator of contemporary art. Nemiroff's affinity for video, installation and mixed-media works that look critically at culture and society can be seen in the choice of such established participants as Kim Adams, Ian Carr-Harris, Robin Collyer, Liz Magor and Colette Whiten, as well as Kati Campbell, Michael Fernandes and Lani Maestro. Predictably, reaction has varied depending on who was in or out. Montreal dealer René Blouin, who represents four artists in the show (Geneviève Cadieux, Gilles Mihalcean, Barbara Steinman and Jana Sterbak) was highly enthusiastic. "We have so few occasions to see work from across the country," he said. "It may sound self-serving, but I think the list is very good." Toronto dealer Jared Sable, a champion of painting whose artist Will Gorlitz is in the show, was less convinced: "These are mostly brand-name people who have shown over and over again at the AGO and at the National Gallery. I don't think the public will get too many surprises."



Ian Carr-Harris
The Anchor Bible, "Judith," A New Translation... 1988
Table, book, battery,
fibreglass sheet, plaster head
47 x 41 x 113 in.
Photo: Henk Visser

At the National Gallery, the curator defends her choices with considerable aplomb. "It is not 'Diana Nemiroff's Greatest Hits,' but neither is it bland and self-censored, which I hope will constitute a strength." She describes three areas of thematic interest that are reflected in the show: the representation of the body in contemporary culture, social conditions of city life, and the search for values in the modern world. Many of those selected are creating new work for the show. Instead of concentrating on emerging artists, she looked for the best, established or not. "There is an unfortunate tendency in Canada for career profiles to flatten out. Whereas in Europe artists generally wait a long time for recognition, we give them a lot of support and attention when they're young. Then that's it, and we say, 'Oh no, not her again.' That is a dangerous thing to do."



Kati Campbell
Dyad 1988
Photo serigraph on transparent
plastic film and painted wood
92 x 48 x 55 in.
Photo: Stan Douglas

What will take the heat off Nemiroff — and the National Gallery — in the future is that the Biennial will rotate to different curators and galleries across the country in the next decade, including the Vancouver Art Gallery (in 1991), the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Toronto's Art Gallery of Ontario and the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal. Thus, in a typically Canadian compromise, each region will have its kick at the can, and inevitably its chance to be kicked in return. *Gillian MacKay*

"At this point in my life I'm turning a new page," says France Morin, the hard-driving former Montreal art dealer who assumed the directorship of the government-run 49th Parallel Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art in New York six years ago and who has been kicking butt ever since. This fall she embarks on a new venture as senior curator of Manhattan's New Museum of Contemporary Art. It's certainly one of the plum jobs in the New York scene, but not without its challenges. Dedicated to the democratization and broadening of the discourse of art, the New Museum's programming often strays far from the mainstream into the realm of the woolly. Morin, with her unequivocal attitudes in matters of taste, may offer them the measure of starch they need.

As well this fall, Morin acts as Canadian commissioner to the São Paolo Biennal, taking as her solo exhibitor Montreal artist Betty Goodwin, who has prepared a series of small sculptures called *Steel Notes* for the show.

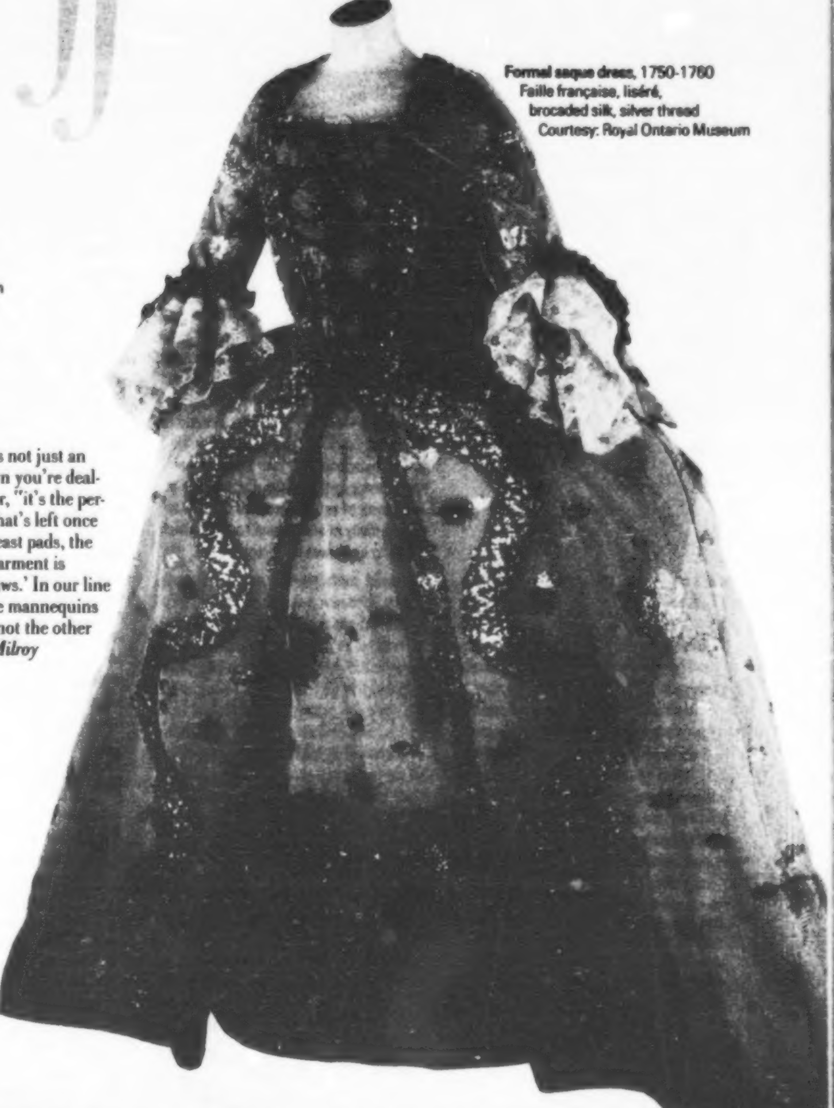
But while Morin contemplates her future plans, Canada's Department of External Affairs is still struggling with the future of the 49th and the naming of its new director. By Morin's admission, he or she will have an entirely different set of challenges. First, the director will be answerable to a curatorial board in a way that would have been unthinkable under Morin. As well, the future course of the 49th may have an increasingly commercial mandate.

While the debate rages, Morin seems happy to put it behind her. Reluctant to discuss her legacy, she remarks, "I think what I wanted to do was obvious. I mounted over 50 exhibitions. I helped the image of Canadian artists to grow. I fought a lot with the government to keep the place open. The place is still open. I think that is the story."
Sarah Milroy

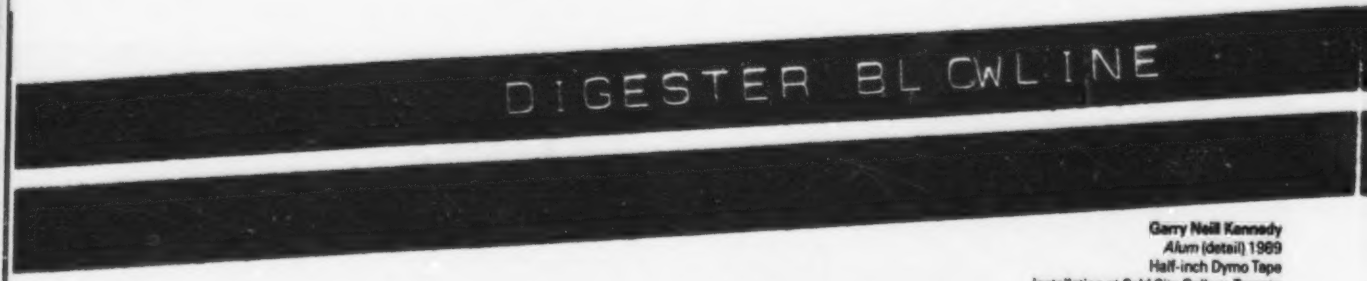
France Morin during her
sojourn as director of
the 49th Parallel Centre
for Contemporary Canadian
Art, New York City
Photo: Paul Orenstein

Charles Comfort
Panzerturm Overlooking the Coufini Plain c.1944
Watercolor, 14 x 22 in.
Collection: Canadian War Museum
From the show *Lest We Forget*
at the London Regional Art Gallery
September 9 to October 29

Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum may be Canada's cultural institution least likely to elicit surprise or wonder — unless you happen to be under five. There's just something about the place. But starting this fall there is a new something to do after the bat cave: the Samuel European Galleries — a whole new wing of the museum devoted to the decorative arts. Displays include metal work, glass and ceramics, arms and armour and — last but not least — costumes and textiles. Expectations are particularly high for this last category (it's been 10 years since Toronto fashion hounds have had somewhere to go digging). Alexandra Palmer is the curatorial consultant responsible for the textile department's first show, *Measure for Measure*, opening to the public on October 12. Palmer says much of her fascination with costume history lies not in the garments themselves, but in the clues they offer about their former inhabitants. "In the end, it's not just an 18th-century ball gown you're dealing with," says Palmer, "it's the person who wore it — what's left once you strip away the breast pads, the way the form of the garment is created to conceal 'flaws.' In our line of work, you make the mannequins to fit the clothes and not the other way around." *Sarah Milroy*



Formal sacque dress, 1750-1760
Faille française, liséré,
brocaded silk, silver thread
Courtesy: Royal Ontario Museum

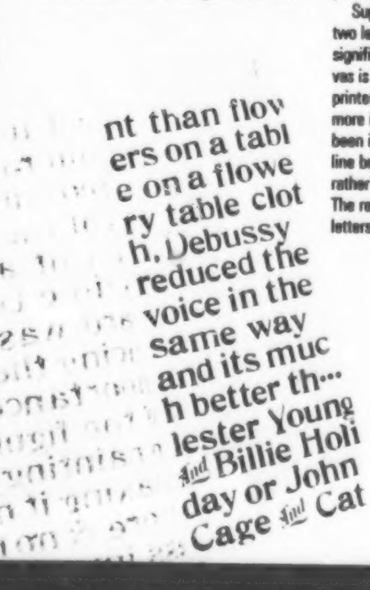


Garry Neill Kennedy
Alum (detail) 1989
Half-inch Dymo Tape
Installation at Cold City Gallery, Toronto
½ x 72 in.

Those with a taste for irony should make a point of checking out Garry Neill Kennedy's fall show at Toronto's Cold City Gallery (September 23 to October 18). Kennedy, for 22 years the president of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, has made a career out of the perverse. In 1980 he proposed to rehang the National Gallery's second-floor galleries in order to line up all of the horizons. (Permission was denied.) For another show he emblazoned his own name in enormous typeface over the surface of the gallery walls — a deflation by exaggeration of the cult of the heroic artist. Common to all his work is an interest in the implicit systems that govern representation, a conceptualist's attention to process and language, and an extreme skepticism about the commercialization and attendant trivialization of the art world (his 1980 show at Mercer Union was called *Recent Plants: An Exhibition of Potted Plants on Loan from the Galleries of Fifteen Toronto Art Dealers*).

Kennedy's most recent work, *Alum*, exhibited in a Cold City group show in the summer, consisted of a strip of half-inch letter-gun tape mounted to the wall behind the receptionist's desk. Upon it were inscribed the words "alum...black liquor...bleached stock...brown stock ...chlorine dioxied...digester blowline." What does it all mean? "They are all names of substances used in the pulp and paper industry," states Kennedy matter of factly. "I found them in a catalogue on commercial stock signage. I'm interested in what they look like out of context." This fall, Kennedy returns to Cold City for another show with his word gun in hand and other no doubt ticklish strategies up his sleeve.
Sarah Milroy

Garry Neill Kennedy
Garry Neill Kennedy: Superstar Shadow 1986
Installation on 10 walls at Stride Gallery, Calgary



Greg Curnoe
Above: *Blue Book #6*
July-November, 1964
Right: Rubber stamp book
6 X 15 in.

Greg Curnoe's lettered works are the focus of a special retrospective exhibition, *Rubber Stamp Book and Collages* this fall at Art Metropole in Toronto. The exhibition was organized by Michael Klein, project co-ordinator Art Metropole. The show will include many original works including Curnoe's stamped blue diaries, some of which date back to the early '60s.

Curnoe was born in London, Ontario, where he continues to live and work. He came to national and then international prominence in the 1960s. Curnoe was at the centre of an extraordinary burst of artistic activity in and around London, which came to be known as "oregionalism." He is best known for his sensuously colored paintings of the '70s, noted for their radical politics as much as their unorthodox beauty. Hailed as one of Canada's foremost pop artists in the '60s and then as a colorist in the '70s, he had much more in common with European realist expressionists like Otto Dix or the simultaneist Robert Delaunay.

The works exhibited in this show represent the stripped-down quality of all his art. Yet they are anything but austere, ranging from the floridly personal, even scatological, in the early journals, to the categorical and itemized lists of the later paintings.

Superficially the texts seem to exist on two levels: text as signifier and text as signified. Looking at a large stamped canvas is like looking at a blow-up of a printed page, except that the lines are more irregular because each letter has been individually applied. Also, Curnoe's line breaks follow the edge of the canvas rather than the usual design conventions. The result is to focus the viewer on the letters as abstract shapes, as signifieds rather than signifiers. However, there is more to this work. Curnoe's descriptive project shares concerns with Wittgenstein's philosophy, particularly meaning and context as mutually defining terms. This rewarding speculative aspect definitely makes this a show to come back to.
Christopher Dewdney

CHLORINE DIOXIED

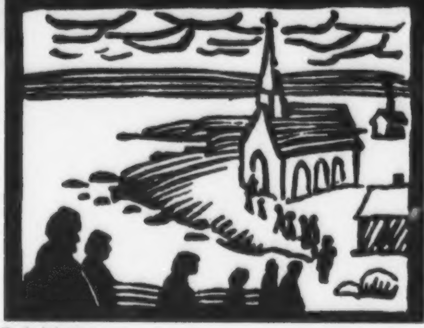
During the late 1960s, one of Canada's oldest Black communities disappeared. Africville was founded at Halifax's northern tip in the mid-1800s by families, some of whose roots in Nova Scotia already went back a hundred years. The community survived racism, municipal neglect and the 1917 Halifax Explosion only to fall victim to urban renewal.

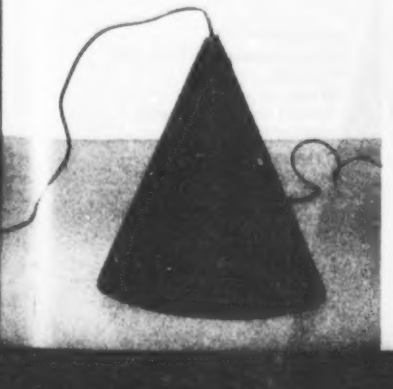
Twenty years after the last home was bulldozed, the site was transformed into a park. Africville will be visible again, however, through an exhibition organized by the Art Gallery, Mount Saint Vincent University. *Africville: A Spirit That Lives On* — a collaboration between the gallery and the Africville Genealogy Society, The Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia and the National Film Board, Atlantic Centre — comprises audio-visual material, objects, photographs, documents, hymnals and the altar from the Seaview United Baptist Church. (An annual Easter gospel service is still held in the open air on the site of the old church.)

Journalists and liberal reformers have long labelled Africville a ghetto. But Henry Bishop, curator of The Black Cultural Centre, observes that most contemporary photographers took care to record the dishevelled backs of houses, rather than their more carefully tended fronts. He hopes the exhibition will "reflect the positive side" of Africville and celebrate "the spirit of the people... Most had independent lives. They worked on the railways, had their small farms and gardens." When the city of Halifax consistently refused to install proper services but nevertheless saddled the community with a dumpsite, some Africville residents created their own businesses recycling its contents.

The exhibition runs from October 20 to November 19 and is funded by the Museums Assistance Programs of the Department of Communications. Related activities include a conference and an evening of performances by Black artists, including the Halifax a cappella group For the Record. *Africville* will tour nationally for three years before finding its permanent home at the Black Cultural Centre.
Robin Metcalfe

Africville Annual Reunion, 1988
Members of the Africville Genealogy Society, including artist Ruth Johnson (seated, middle)
Collection: Africville Genealogy Society


Ruth Johnson
Going to Church in Africville 1949
Black and white linoleum print
5 x 3 ⅞ in.
Collection: the artist


Lee Dickson
Mattered World 1986
Woven beads, welded steel, braised copper, electrically lit
75 x 32 x 30 in.

Toronto artist Lee Dickson is becoming well-known for her carefully crafted and conceptualized sculptural pieces involving labor-intensive components such as detailed beadwork and organically oxidized metal (Dickson has left parts of her sculptures on her fire escape to wait patiently for rain). These days she is becoming even better known for her early photographs and recent sculptural studies of mundane signs, symbols and subjects.

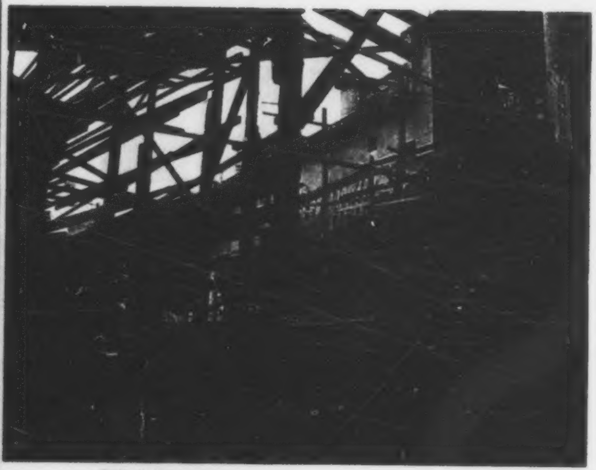
This fall Dickson is displaying the fruits of her interminable patience and meticulous attention to detail at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery from October 21 to November 29. An early wall piece from 1985 entitled *Photo Research* is included. The work consists of 12 framed silver prints accompanied by text — an archive of visual representation describing a dozen forms: spirals and cones, fashion, discs, human form, logos, maps, chairs, numbers, grids, definitions of space, globes and repetitive designs. If you enjoy looking at Letraset catalogues or flipping through dictionaries of decoration just for the hell of it (which most visually inclined people do), this piece will especially appeal to you.

An exemplary example of Dickson's beadwork is also included in this show as one of the sculptural components of the multi-media *Mattered World* (1986). Beadwork "maps" the continents and oceans on the surface of a globe electrically lit from within and attached to a cone of braised copper. Easily the most abstract piece in the show, *Mattered World* addresses the conventions of "mapping information."

The centrepiece of the show, also to be exhibited at Toronto's Mercer Union (January 4 to February 3) is *"The heart is situated in the centre of the chest because conditions are more temperate there"* (1988). Thirty-six models of the human heart, many of them anatomically correct, sit side by side on mounts of braised steel in a wall unit of shelving. The hearts are constructed out of such eclectic materials as cigarette butts, grass, lentils, barbed wire, pearls, woven seed beads, vinyl, concrete, hair and pine cones, as well as more conventional materials such as wax, clay and aluminum. Taken together, they're a testament to Dickson's talent for extracting diverse and perverse meanings out of well-worn icons.
Donna Lypchuk

The fact that *Bill Viola* is the first one-man video (and video installation) show ever mounted by the Museum of Modern Art is significant; Viola is a master. The fact that it is coming from MoMA to the Winnipeg Art Gallery (September 14 to November 22) is also remarkable. True to his medium's perennial marginalization, Viola remains far from the mainstream. Yet his work is a testament to his chosen vehicle, both for its immediacy and for its capacity for intimacy. The gaze of Viola's video lens is disconcerting, a meditative, limpid looking that subtly warps our experience of time and makes the boundaries between ourselves and our surrounds seem oddly insubstantial. Viola's primary subject is nature, but his work is the flip side of the picturesque — not nature constrained by the imposing frame of pictorial convention, but nature left to unfold in its own sweet time, an utterly unselfconscious universe. When we watch the buffalos grazing in Viola's masterpiece *I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like* (1987), we are left utterly alone, accompanied only by the wind thundering against the microphone and the indifferent sky. Reminding us where it is we really are is Viola's peculiar magic. *Bill Viola*, curated by the Museum of Modern Art's Barbara London, includes both video and installations. *Sarah Milroy*

Bill Viola
Ancient of Days 1979-81
Color videotape
12 min., 21 sec.
Photo: Kira Perov
Collection: Museum of Modern Art, New York



Tadashi Kawamata
Construction Site Project,
Fukuroi, Japan 1988

Colonial Tavern Park is a scrubby parkette in downtown Toronto, bordered on either side by a vacant neoclassical bank, where once stood a club for jazz and blues. Over the summer, it became a theatre of operation for Japanese installation artist Tadashi Kawamata, best known as the man who, for *documenta 8*, covered the ruins of a war-bombed church in Kassel, West Germany, with a delicate membrane of scavenged wood — his trademark.

In Toronto, Kawamata, working with local assistants and structural engineer Morden Yolles, slung one of his "very private, fetishistic things," as he calls his temporary wooden webs, across the park to join the banks. His purpose was to repair the streetscape, and recreate the tavern, if not as a functioning club, at least as a framework for collective memory.

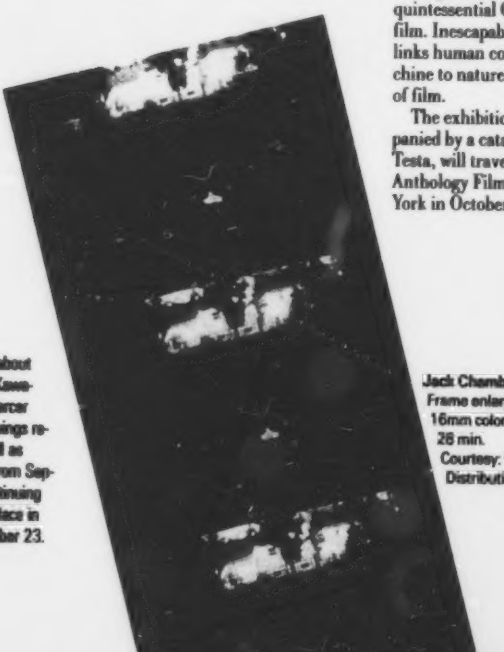
"My work is like a parasite, like a cancer," he says. "If I can make it disturbing with respect to how people think about architecture, that's my position." Kawamata was invited to Toronto by Mercer Union, where maquettes and drawings related to the *Toronto Project* as well as other works will be on exhibition from September 7 to October 7, before continuing on to the new Galerie Brenda Wallace in Montreal, November 25 to December 23. *Adele Freedman*

The proposition that the physiography and geography of Canada have shaped the Canadian imagination recurs continually in writing and thinking about Canadian culture. Whether we agree with, or even like, this notion, our landscape is not a tame garden or peaceful glade redolent of an idyllic paradise, but rather a formidable physical presence that has generated equally formidable theoretical constructs. Any work of art that concerns itself with the Canadian landscape must thus also concern itself with how we situate ourselves in that landscape physically and intellectually.

The Art Gallery of Ontario's five-part film series, *Spirit in the Landscape*, looks at how a number of artists and experimental filmmakers have responded to the landscape on film. Conceived and curated by filmmaker and teacher Richard Kerr — whose film *On Land Over Water* (1984) is included among the selections — the series includes work from the past 20 years by Jim Anderson, Raphael Bendahan, Jack Chambers, Bruce Elder, Rick Hancox, David Rimmer, Barbara Sternberg, Michael Snow and Joyce Wieland.

The highlight of the series is Snow's 1971 three-hour *La Region Centrale*, shot in a remote northern region of Quebec with the camera mounted on a specially constructed machine capable of a seemingly infinite range of movement and speed. A paradigm of structuralist filmmaking, *La Region Centrale* has become the quintessential Canadian landscape film. Inescapably visceral, the film links human consciousness to machine to nature through the medium of film.

The exhibition, which is accompanied by a catalogue written by Bart Testa, will travel to Regina as well as Anthology Film Archives in New York in October. *Elke Town*



Jack Chambers
Frame enlargement from *Circle*, 1969
16mm color film
28 min.
Courtesy: Canadian Filmmakers Distribution

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SHERRY GRAUER, *"The Planning Committee-Sirius"*, 48" x 60", 1989

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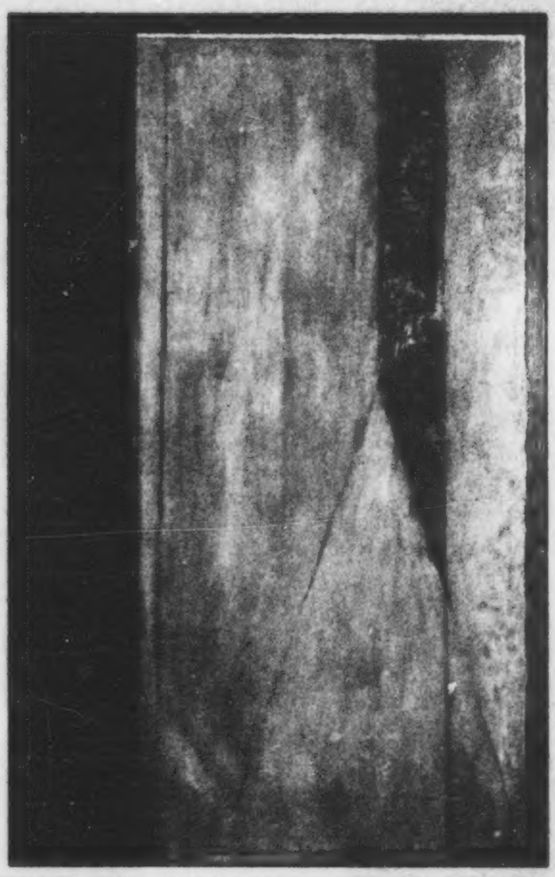
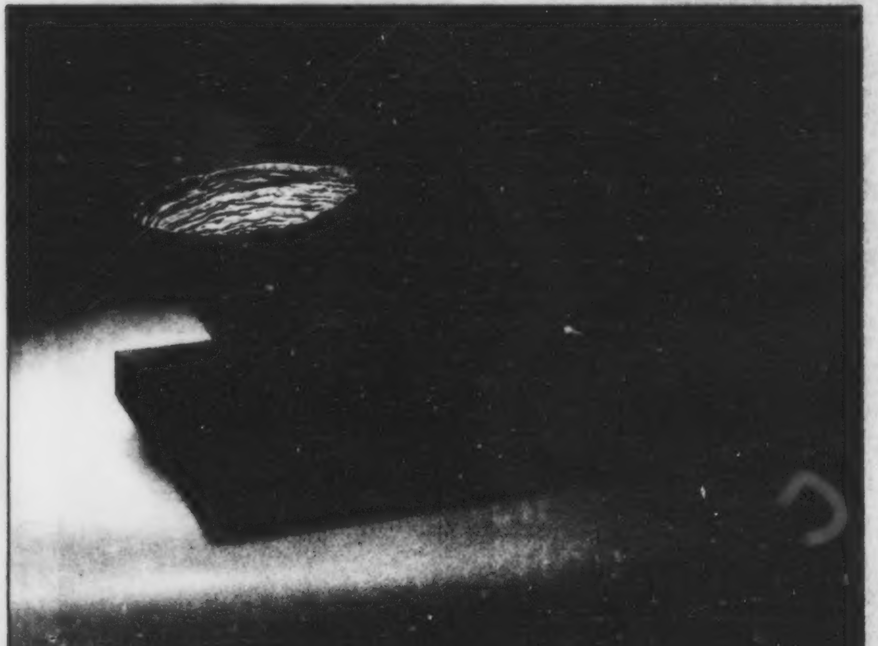


DAVID SORENSEN, *"Enigmatic Entry"*, oil on canvas, 73.25" x 46.5", 1989

TIMOTHY WEATHERILL, *"The Ecstasy"*, bronze, mahogany, cotton, 10" x 24" x 14", 1989



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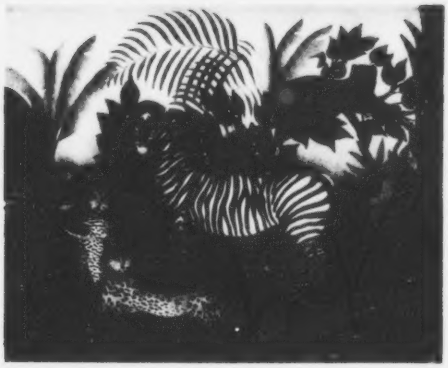

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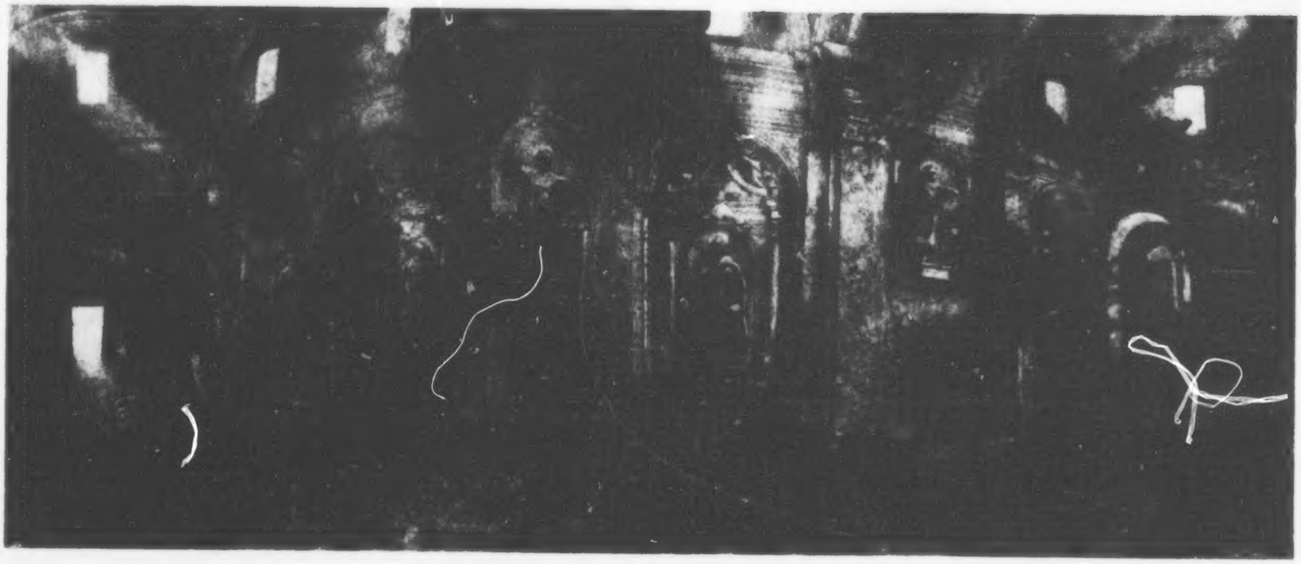

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©BARBARA COLE, *ARMS AND LEGS*, 1988, 24" × 20", EKTACOLOUR

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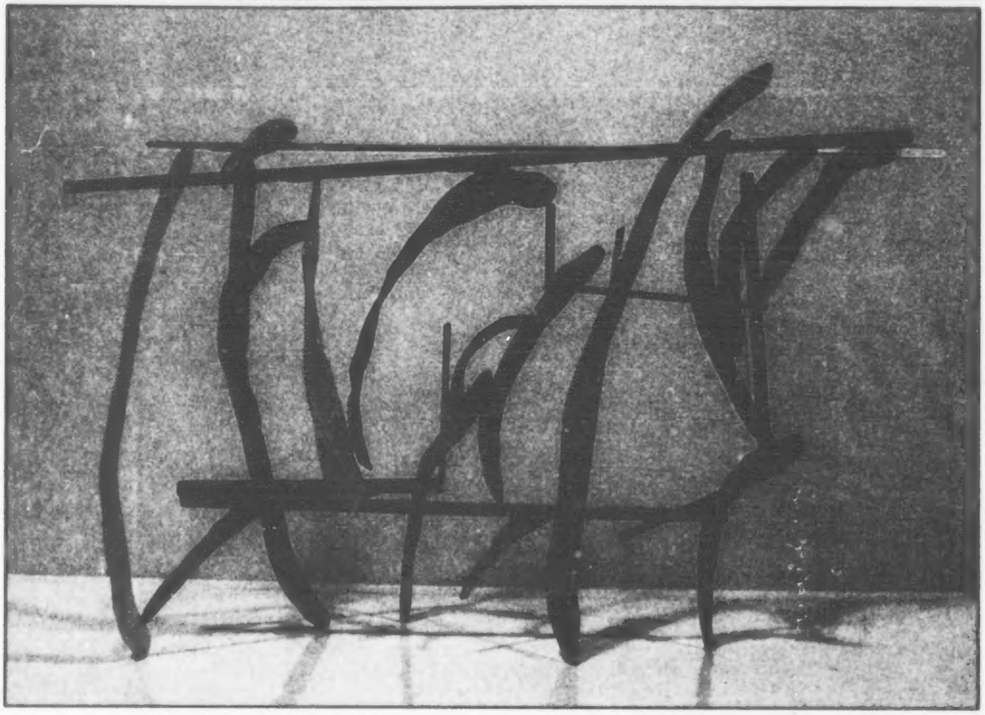

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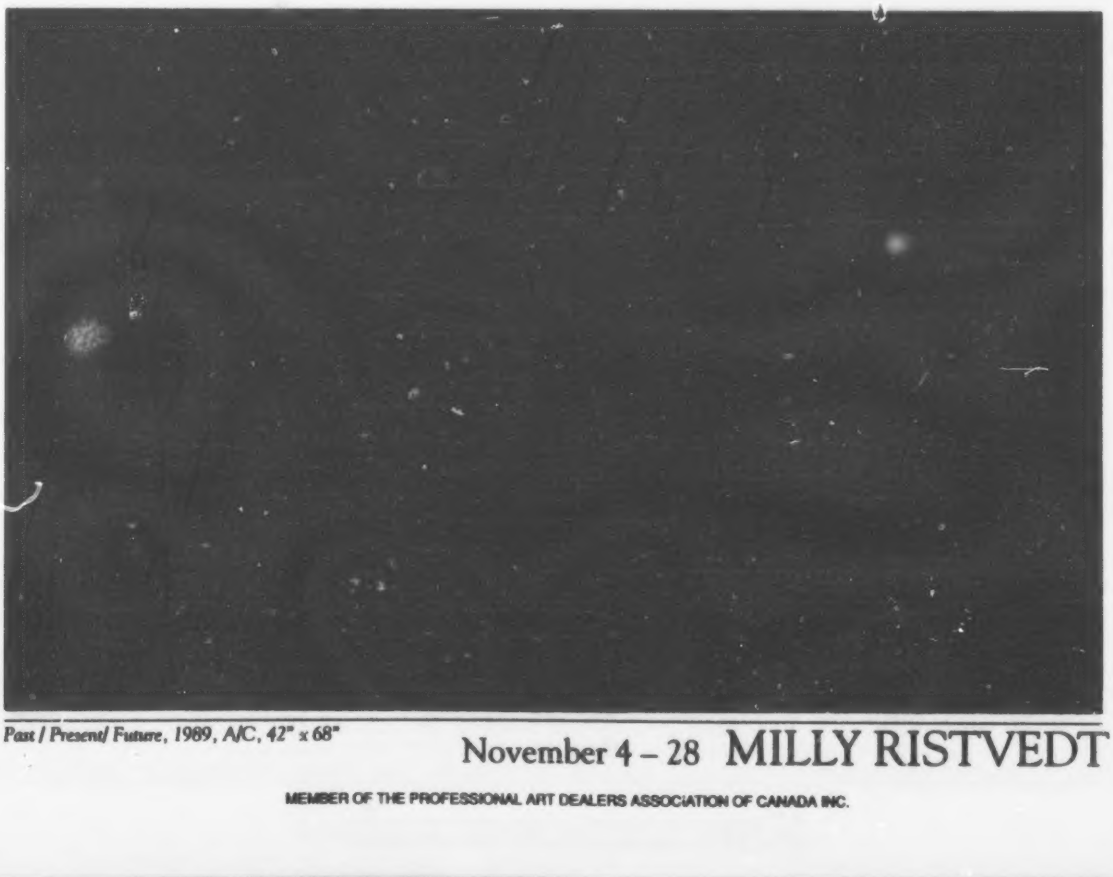

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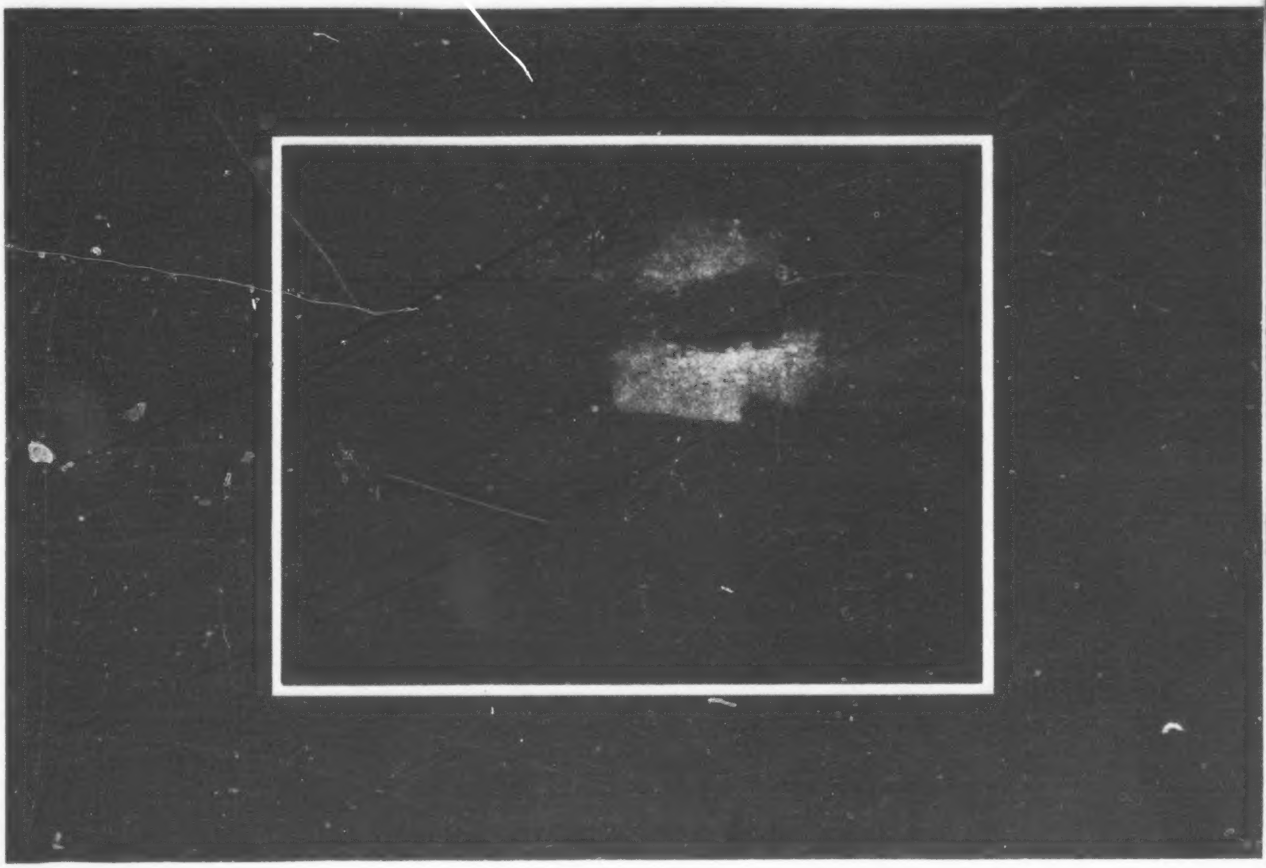

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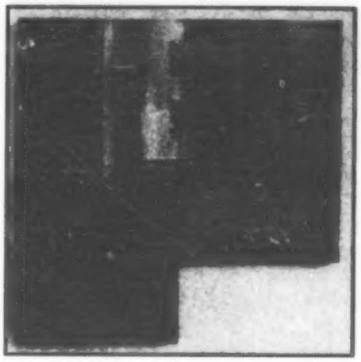

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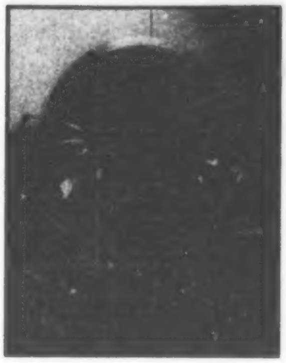

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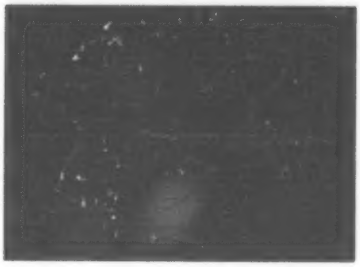

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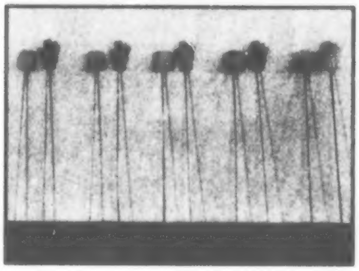

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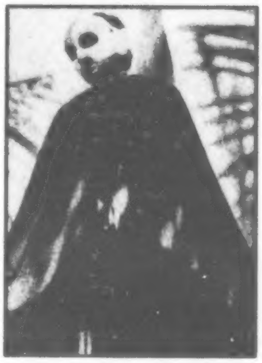

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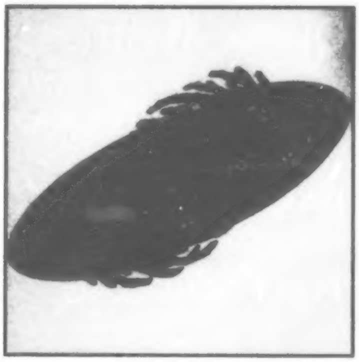

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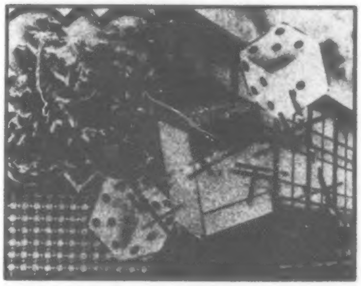

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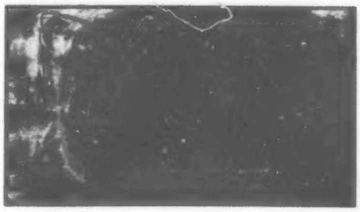

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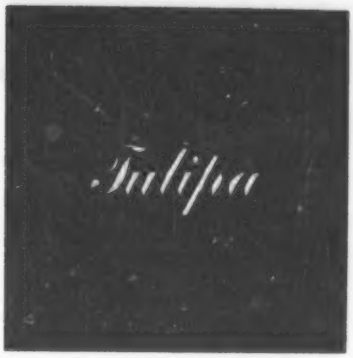

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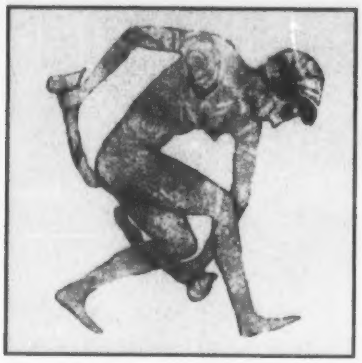

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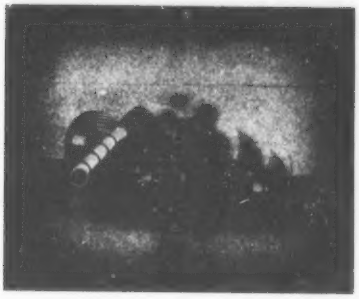

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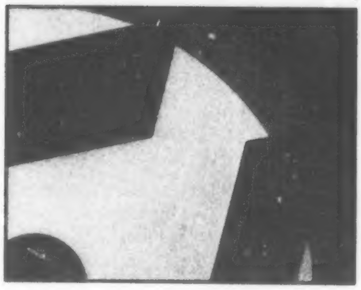

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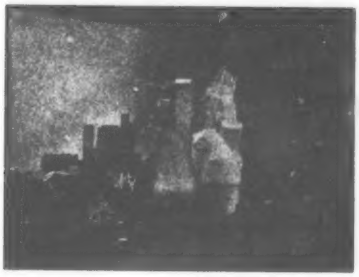

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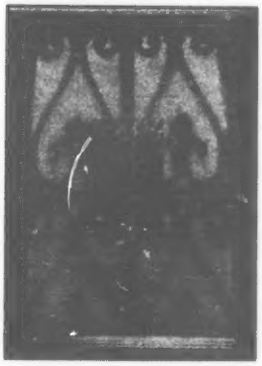

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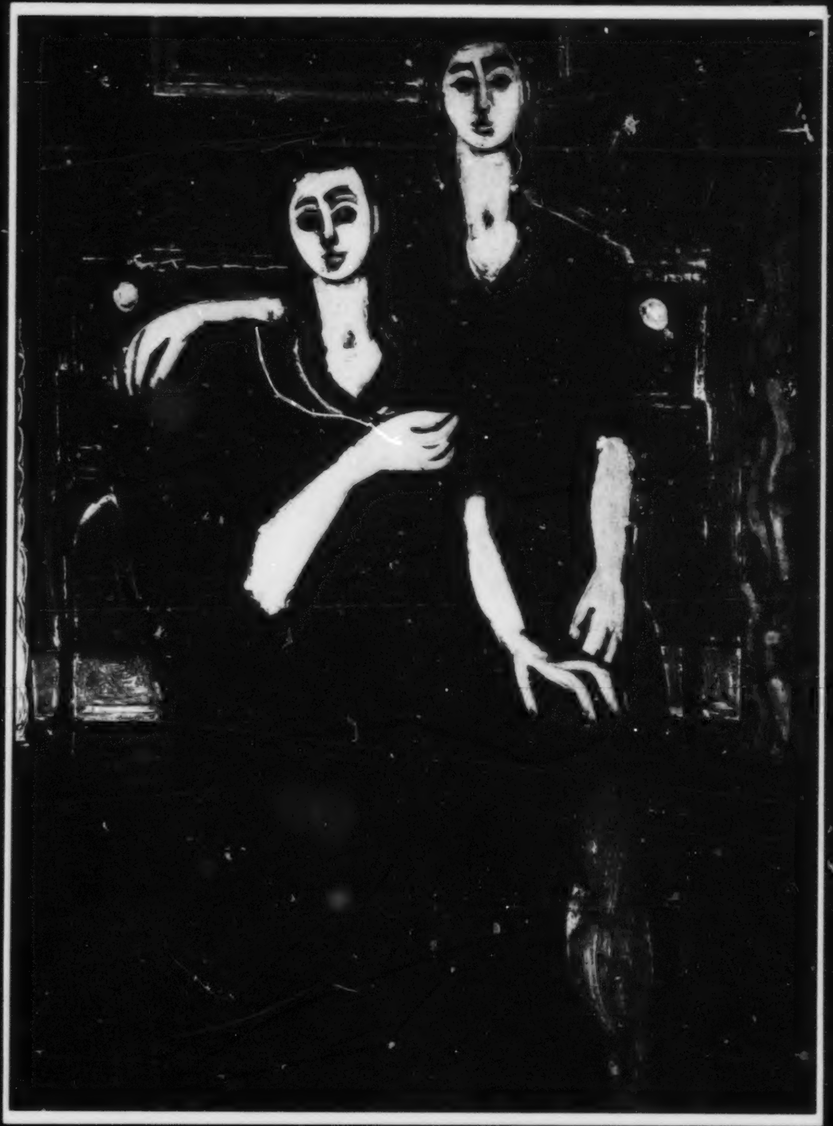

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"Lucille and Fifi",
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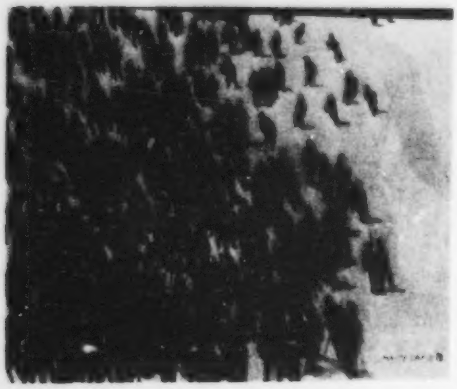

"Crowd, Crabbe Mountain", 1989
Canvas 40" x 48"

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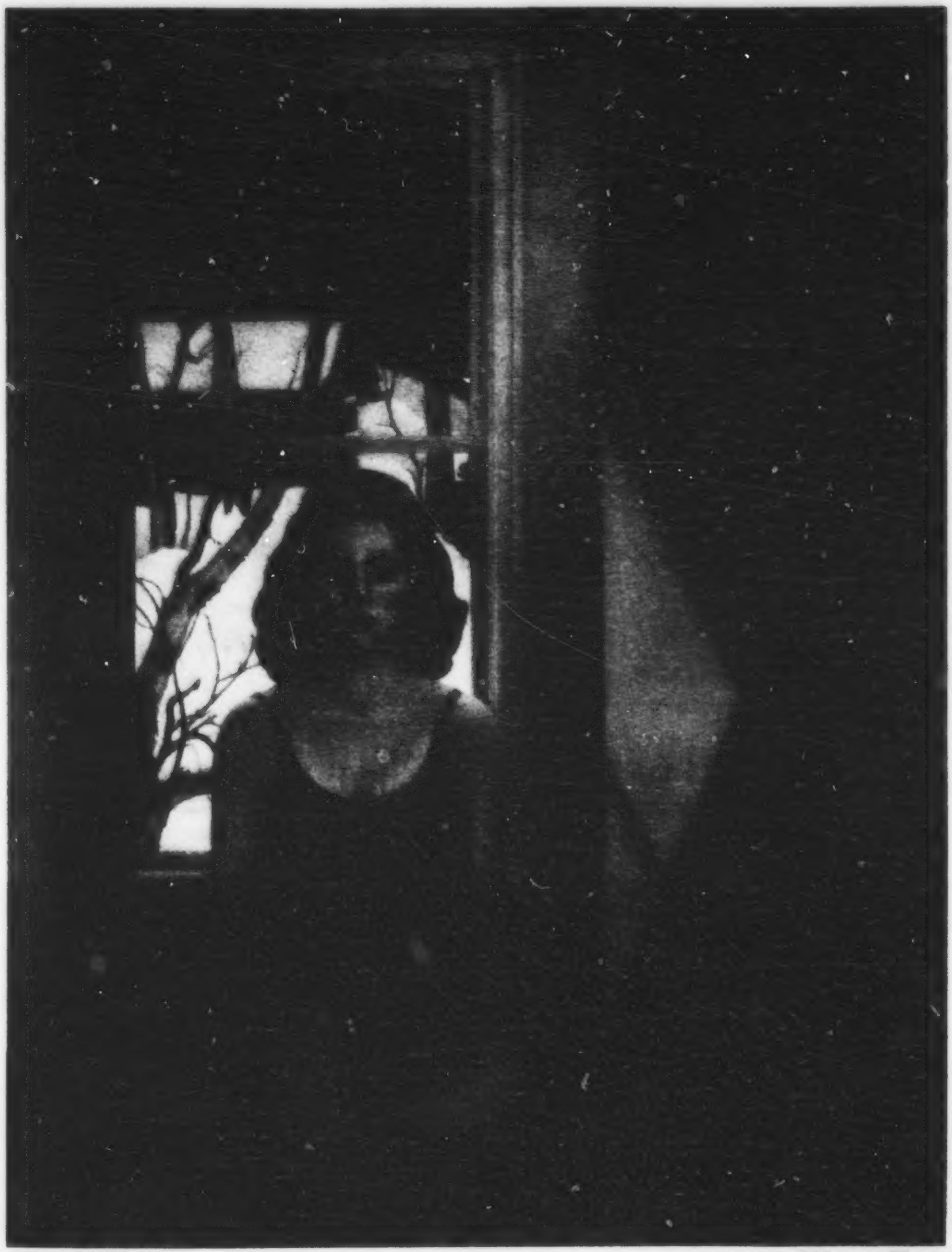

"Virago" Oil/Linen *113 cm x 89 cm*

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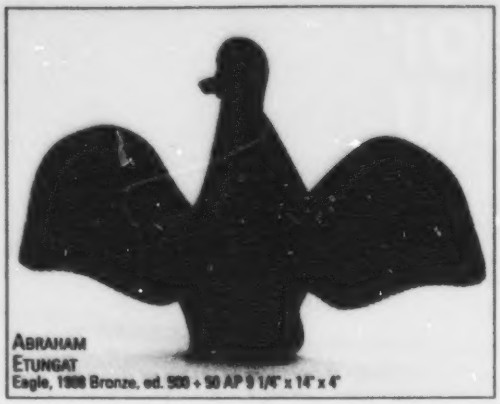

Abraham
Etungat
Eagle, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 9 1/4" x 14" x 4"

William
McElcheran
Autumn Fantasy, 1989 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 10 1/2" x 7" x 4"

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Tony
Urquhart
Cairn, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 12" x 5" x 5 1/2"

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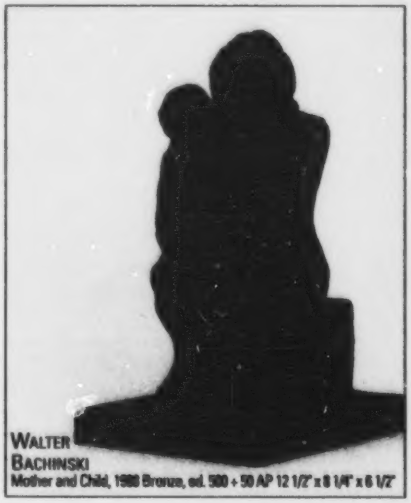
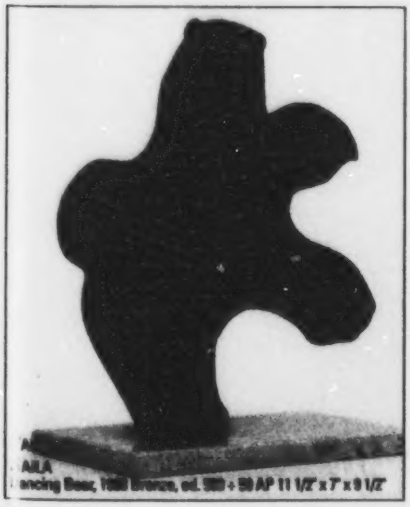
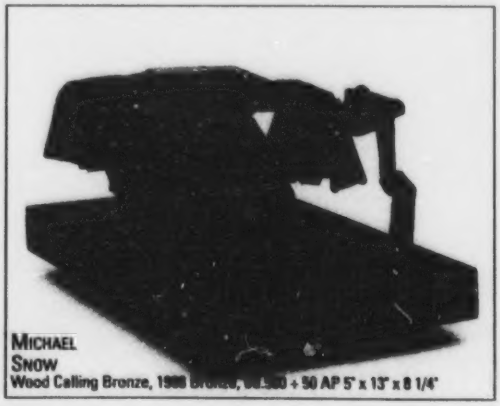


Walter
Bachinski
Mother and Child, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 12 1/2" x 8 1/4" x 6 1/2"



A
Aila
ancing Bear, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 11 1/2" x 7" x 9 1/2"



Michael
Snow
Wood Calling Bronze, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 5" x 13" x 8 1/4"

David
Pellettier
Bottom, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 9" x 7" x 6 1/2"

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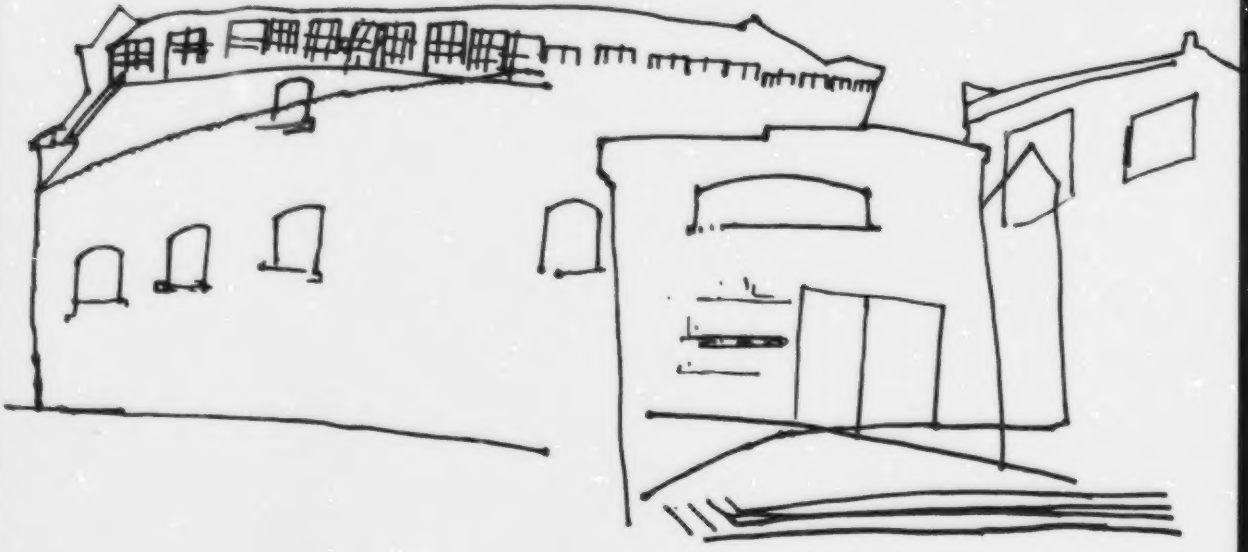

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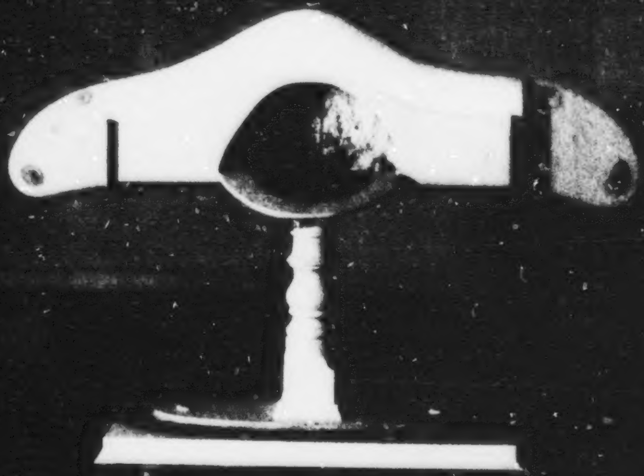
Tony Urquhart



Tony Urquhart detail "Queenest"
1988 mixed media 47 1/2 x 65 1/2 x 15

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MILLER GORE BRITTAIN

(1912-1968)

'Head', c.1957, mixed media, 23 1/2 x 17 in.

Miller Brittain was one of this country's great painters. He worked outside the mainstream of Canadian art and concerned himself primarily with man, as distinct from those who looked at the landscape. (Even then, most big-name painters did not see it as a setting for humanity.) Brittain lived and worked in Saint John, New Brunswick, for virtually all of his life, except for his studies at the Art Students League in New York (1931-32) and his service with the RCAF (1941-1946).

The teachers at the Art Students League were recording the American urban scene in a realistic, unromantic manner, and this approach to art was a strong influence on Brittain, especially the work done in the 1930s. During the War, Brittain served as a bomb-aimer; the experience was shattering for him. He also saw William Blake's work while he was in London, and was moved by its symbolic strength.

In the years after the War, Miller Brittain's work turned more to an exploration of what goes on inside people: their joys and terrors, their hopes and despair. This painting is an important example of the artist's exploration of the human spirit, wherein tragedy ends in hope rather than despair.

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Mrs. Captain B. Home in Wesleyville	ed. 50	1979
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The Family	48/50	1982
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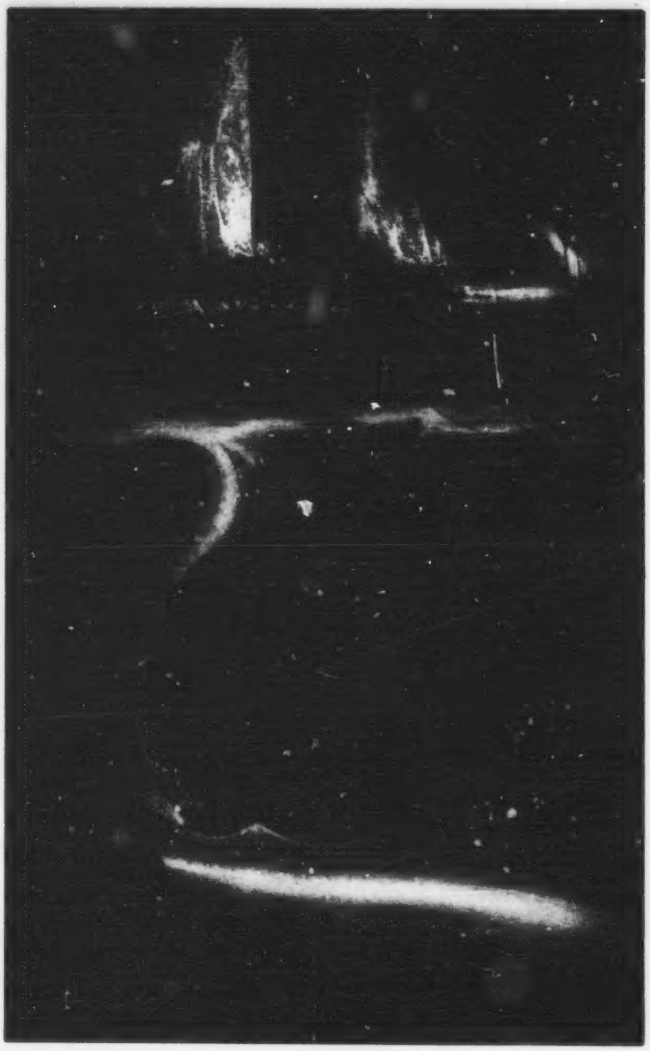
Our Darling Man, Mr. Coaker	11/50	1984
Pound Cove Mummers	29/50	1985
August Iceberg	A/P, 3/10	1988
Trafalgar Veteran	13/50	1988
Box Kite Over Greenspond	56/75	1989

...and others



Fire Down on the Labrador, 1980 *19½" x 31½"*

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"Double Porch" acrylic/canvas, 60" x 60", 1989, Photo: Don Hall

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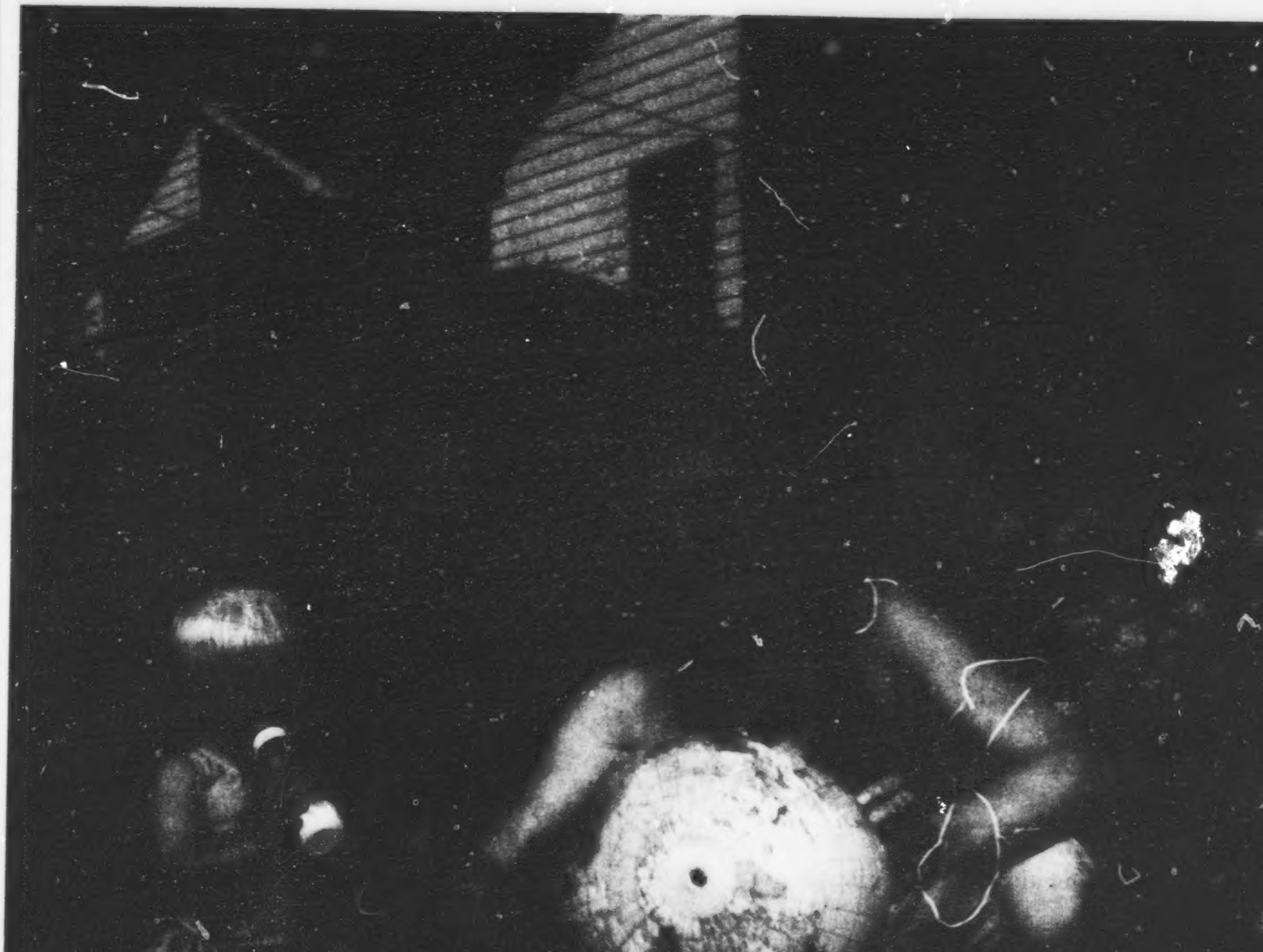
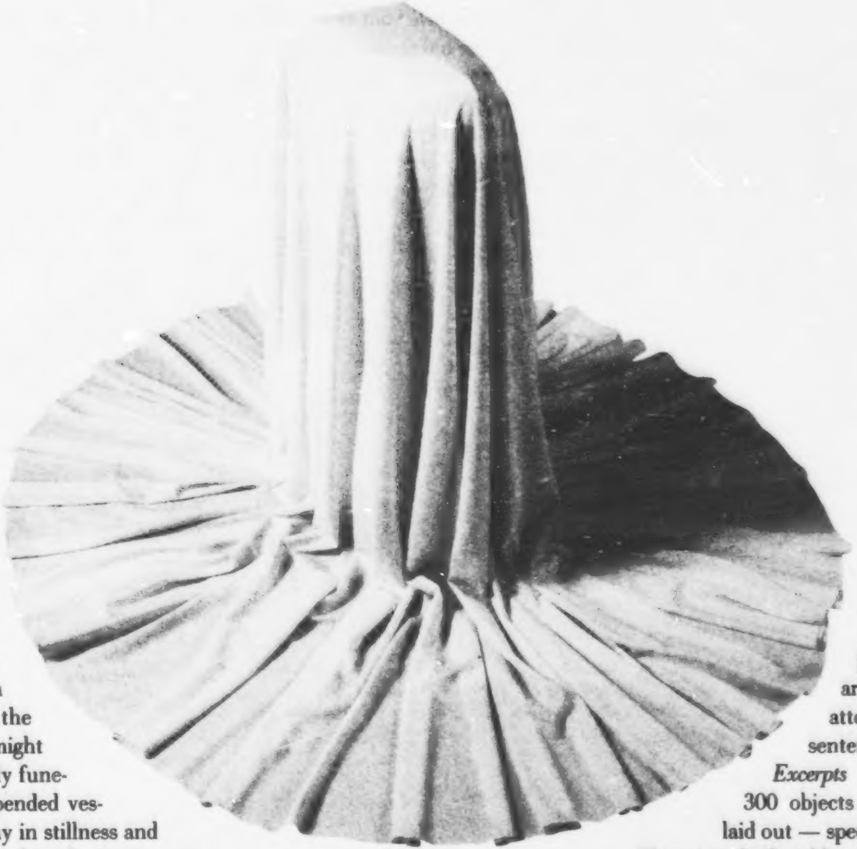


The World As I Saw It

The Visionary Physics of Tom Dean

By Sarah Milroy
Portrait Photograph by Ruth Kaplan



Girl 1989
Gabardine, plaster, Styrofoam
54 x 39 in.
Photo: J. Williamson

Tom Dean's *Girl* looks like a skirt or, as its creator describes it, like "a body cut off at the waist." Others might see it as a strangely funereal flower. An upended vessel. An exotic essay in stillness and motion (its prow-shaped crown cuts through space). A mourning of maidenhead in which, says Dean, "the object of desire is both elevated and concealed" under soft folds of form.

The object stands at the beginning of Dean's new body of work, and in the aftermath of his extraordinary *Excerpts from a Description of the Universe*, the sequential sculptural project that was the artist's sole creative preoccupation from 1984 to 1987. If the *Excerpts* were words, fragments, then the new fabric pieces, like *Girl*, are the artist's first attempts at whole sentences. In all, the *Excerpts* include some 300 objects designed to be laid out — specimen-like — on 40 custom-built tables. Each one is an experiment in Dean's perennial concerns: stillness and thrust, horizontality and verticality, interior and exterior, sameness and difference, transformation and stasis. These concerns should not be mistaken with the merely formal; what makes them compelling is their closeness to our origins, to the basic currency of consciousness.

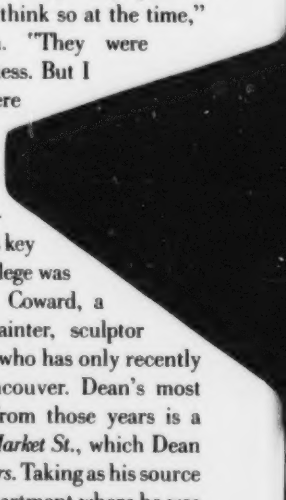
What these enigmatic little forms look like, however, are almost recognizable objects from the everyday world — clothes, hats, tools, wigs, plants — that somehow manage to avoid being quite what we thought they were. Sometimes charming, sometimes hallucinatory, sometimes mundane and sometimes exquisitely beautiful, they are, taken all together, enormously eccentric. If they could speak they would squeak or chatter or hum. In short, they are animated with an intelligence, a veritable laboratory of the imagination.

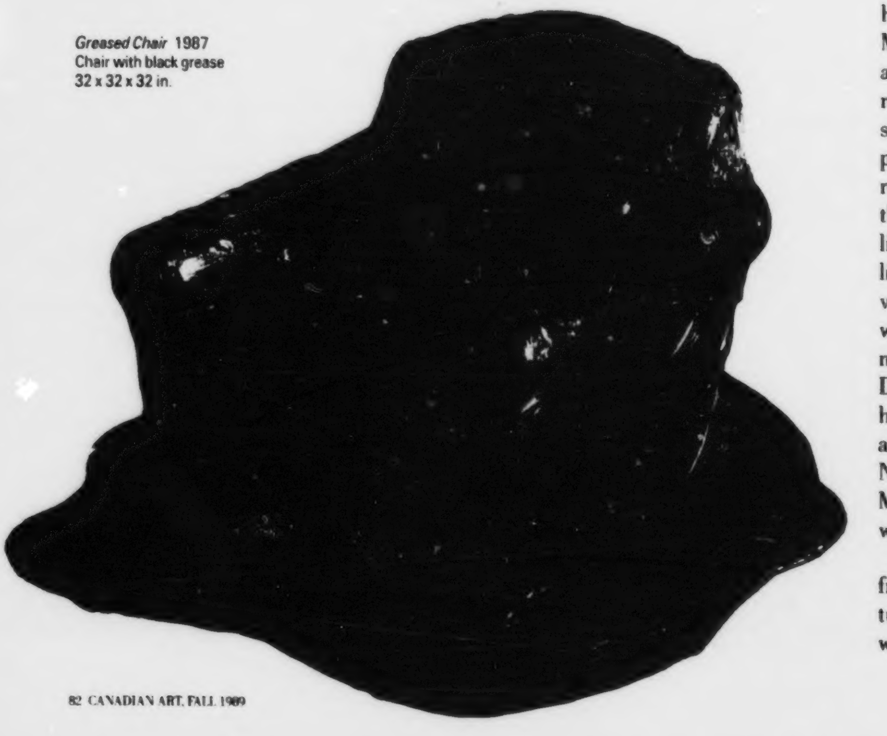
In fact, Dean started out as a scientist, studying physics and mathematics at Carlton University before throwing in the towel in 1967. "I realized the whole notion of the mad scientist — of a sort of Thomas Edison figure — was entirely obsolete. The reality is you end up working for a corporation developing products, instead of being out there on your own." Instead Dean was increasingly drawn to a group of like-minded souls called the Sock and Buskin, a university theatre group that was exploring — among other things — the theatre of the absurd. Here Dean came up against the work of Pinter and Ionesco, playwrights who posited an absurd universe that seemed just like home.

But by the end of 1967, kindred spirits notwithstanding, Dean had left Ottawa for Montreal where he was to spend the next nine years. In his first year there he founded The Yellow Door, a coffee house that was also a clearing house for poets and musicians. As well, he talked his way into the BFA program at Sir George Williams University on the basis of a handful of drawings he had done while working in the Sudbury mines. All of them depicted arrows and what Dean describes as "thrusting forms." "Looking back on them, they were really very phallic, although I didn't think so at the time," remembers Dean. "They were about purposefulness. But I think they were ironic about purposefulness."

So was Dean. Still mired in existential thought, his key influence at art college was his teacher, Gary Coward, a Marxist/Maoist painter, sculptor and rabble-rouser who has only recently resurfaced in Vancouver. Dean's most successful work from those years is a piece called *970 Market St.*, which Dean renamed *Four Floors*. Taking as his source the floors of the apartment where he was living, Dean meticulously replicated four linoleum patterns onto rectangular canvases and mounted them on the wall. The work showed labor as patently absurd, "a mindless but also a meditative act," as Dean remembers it. He may still have harbored doubts about his validity as an artist, but in 1969, Mario Amaya, then a New York curator, talked the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts into buying the work for the museum's collection.

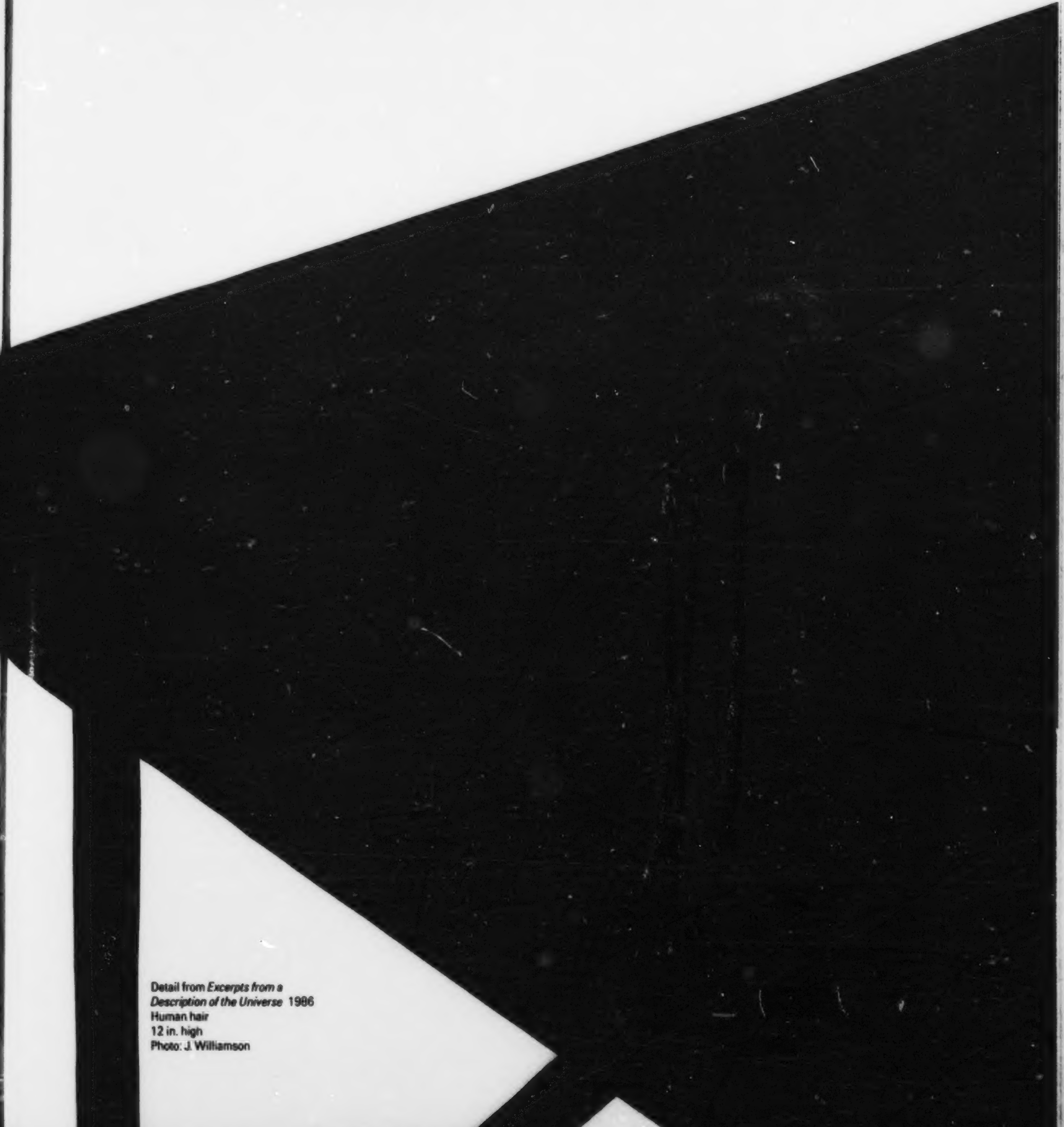
The years between Dean's graduation from art school in 1970 until his departure from Montreal seven years later were frenetically productive and decid-



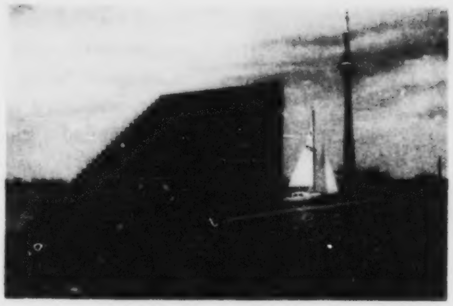


Greased Chair 1987
Chair with black grease
32 x 32 x 32 in.

Excerpts from a Description of the Universe 1986
Porcelain, cast iron, wood
steel, plaster on 10 tables
Each table approx. 8 x 3 ft.

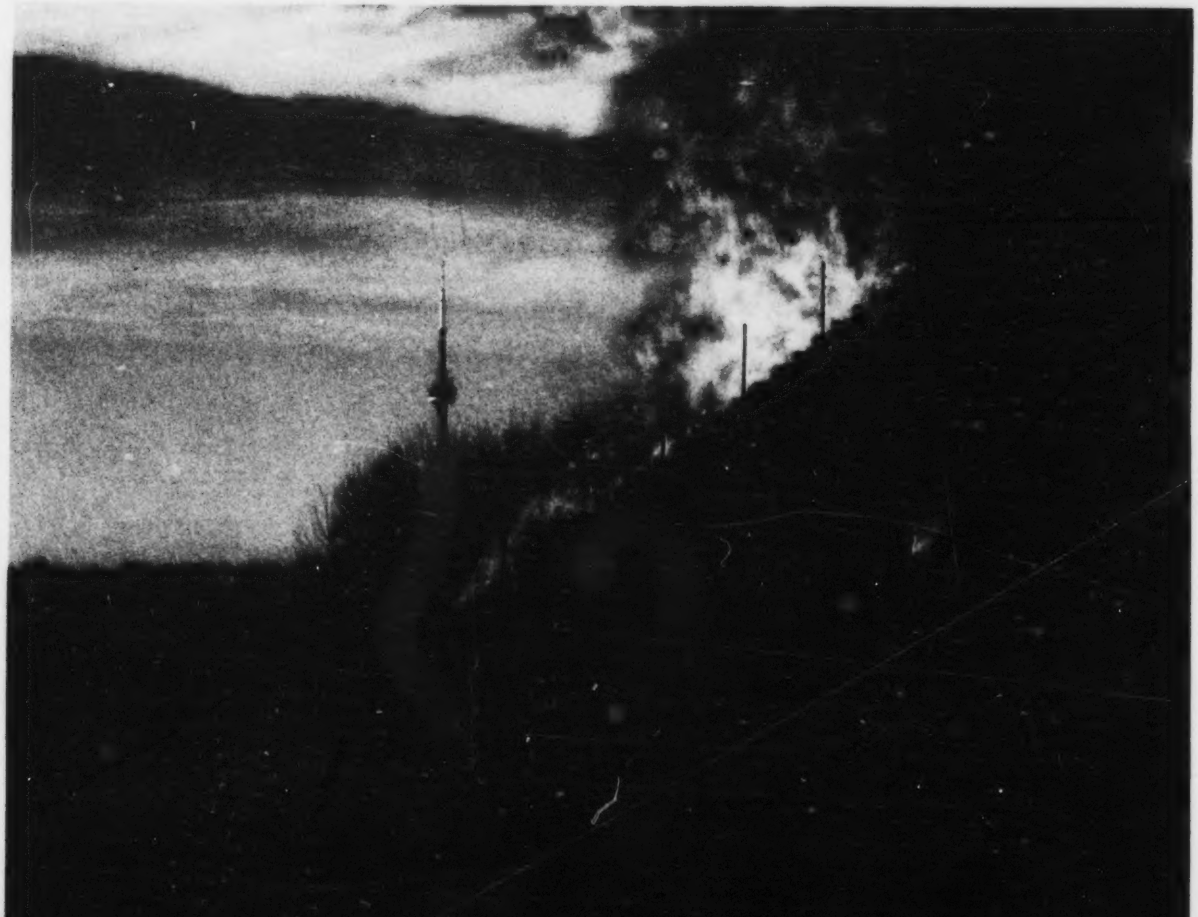


Detail from *Excerpts from a Description of the Universe* 1986
Human hair
12 in. high
Photo: J. Williamson



The Floating Staircase 1978-81
Wood, steel
20 x 22 x 24 in.

Burning of the Floating Staircase 1981



Detail from *Excerpts from a Description of the Universe*
Hair, plaster
Diameter 24 x 12 in.
Styling: John Steinberg
Photo: J. Williamson

edly underground. Soon after graduation, he embarked on a suite he calls "the good-bye paintings" — pretty bleak irony for someone standing at the very beginning of his career. The first of these was an enormous canvas covered with sequins, each one painstakingly sewn on by the artist. This first work spelled out a glittering "GOOD-BYE," while two subsequent installments — painted in acrylic and india ink on canvas — broke the word down into a chaos of dots. Like the linoleum paintings, the goodbye paintings were absurdly labor-intensive, an exercise in futility. But because of their dazzling materiality and their dry humor, they were far from morose. (In fact, Dean's ***GOOD-BYE #1*** became something of a local landmark when he hung it from his studio window above St. Laurent and Prince Arthur.)

In the early '70s, Dean co-founded the artist-run centre Vehicule d'Art. At the same time he began making sculptures and installations that dealt with relativity and perspective. As well, he made his infamous "greased chairs" — armchairs and straight-backed kitchen chairs swaddled in thick grease. Dean says the grease was a way of setting the object apart from its environment, of drawing attention to the elusive boundary between a thing and its environment (elusive to Dean as much because of the particle nature of physical matter as because of the relative nature of perception).

The greased chairs also operate on a purely visceral level, setting up a dialectic of attraction and repulsion. You cannot quite bear not to touch them, but having done so you are immediately beset by the difficult task of getting the grease off your fingers. (When the chairs were shown again at The Power Plant in Toronto several years ago, people desperately tried to wipe their hands on the gallery's white walls.) Like much of his later work, the greased chairs explore the way physical properties and conditions alter behavior and trigger the release of multiple meanings. (Dean and fellow artist Steven Lack used this same strategy in their special pornography issue of *Beaux Arts*, smearing the magazine with Vase-line and bagging it in plastic before distribution.)

Like a lot of Dean's work, the greased chairs had a slightly nasty edge. But in the mid-'70s, an unmistakable note of darkness was starting to take over Dean's work. In 1974, he exhibited photographs of his genitals twisted into hair-raising configurations (which he insists look more painful than they were). But his *Performance* of the same year (a collaboration with Margaret Dragu) was nothing short of grisly. The work opened with tap dancing, a funny song and the seduction music from *Don Giovanni*, but quickly nose-dived in the second half when Dean and another "performer" — a Montreal street fighter — went three rounds in a boxing match, drawing blood and confusing and frightening his audience. In his tussle with purposefulness, he was down for the count.

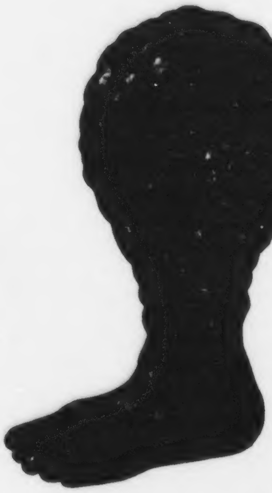
In 1976, Dean moved to Toronto, leaving behind a city that was now inscribed with difficult memories. The works that he began in his new home had an air of regeneration. Certainly Dean's best-known Toronto work — other than the more recent *Excerpts* —is the notorious *Floating Staircase* that Dean and an army of friends and fellow artists built (at Dean's expense) and set afloat on Lake Ontario. Formally, the project summed up Dean's overarching concern — to reconcile the two poles of human nature: the active (the vertical, the purposeful, the transmitter) and the passive (the horizontal, the inert, the receptor). With its large, flat base and its upward reach, the *Floating Staircase* balances both principles in one form.

In a sense, however, it was a contradictory thing: a monument to purposelessness, a stairway to nowhere (particularly ironic when viewed against the newly "world-class" skyline of Toronto). And yet, through the enormous efforts required to build the staircase, to cover its entire surface with thousands of tiny dots (a throwback to the *GOOD-BYE* paintings), to maintain it, to defend it from vandals and from the harbor police, and to worry about its future (one plan was to motorize it and sail it up the Welland Canal to Ottawa), Dean's *Staircase* was an affirmation of striving, creativity and action over inertness, even though in the end he destroyed his Frankenstein in a semi-public burning ceremony. (The ruins were subsequently exhibited at Mercer Union in Toronto and are now in storage at the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery.)

From 1978 until 1981, the *Floating Staircase* absorbed all of Dean's resources — financial, physical and creative. With the staircase burned and his obligations to it severed, he experienced something like levity. Out of this new mood grew the meditative and sweetly melancholy videotape (originally conceived as a performance) entitled *Fear of Blue*, a rambling poetic discourse on mankind's love and awe of the great blue void above. "As the hand is at the end of the arm, so blue is above us," wrote Dean; it is a condition of our existence, shaping consciousness and defining our thoughts. The hour-long work is made up of slow-paced hand-held shots of the sky bisected by planes, punctuated by building cranes, replete with clouds — amorphous fields for imaginative projection — and of the sea, the fathomless body of blue that gathers up both our love of flight (the weightlessness of swimming) and our fear of falling. All of this rolls by us to the accompaniment of the melancholy melodies of old cowboy tunes, yodelling and slide guitar. The universe of *Fear of Blue* is a universe that is at once lonely and oddly maternal, like being embraced by nothing.

It is also a universe whose physical properties — like the color blue — govern us in elusive ways. It was this line of enquiry that lead Dean to an explosion of form, the *Excerpts From a Description of the Universe*. The first set of *Excerpts* — a single table of objects — was exhibited at an Ontario College of Art faculty open house show in 1985 (Dean still works there as a teacher and has spent the last three years heading up OCA's New York studio). Like much of Dean's earlier work, the series bites off more than it is possible to chew, attempting to describe the universe as a kind of meditative discipline. In this series, Dean deploys an exhaustive sculptural vocabulary — the sphere, the cone, the ellipse, the square, the cylinder, the hollow vessel, the draped form, the measuring form, the form in motion, the static form.

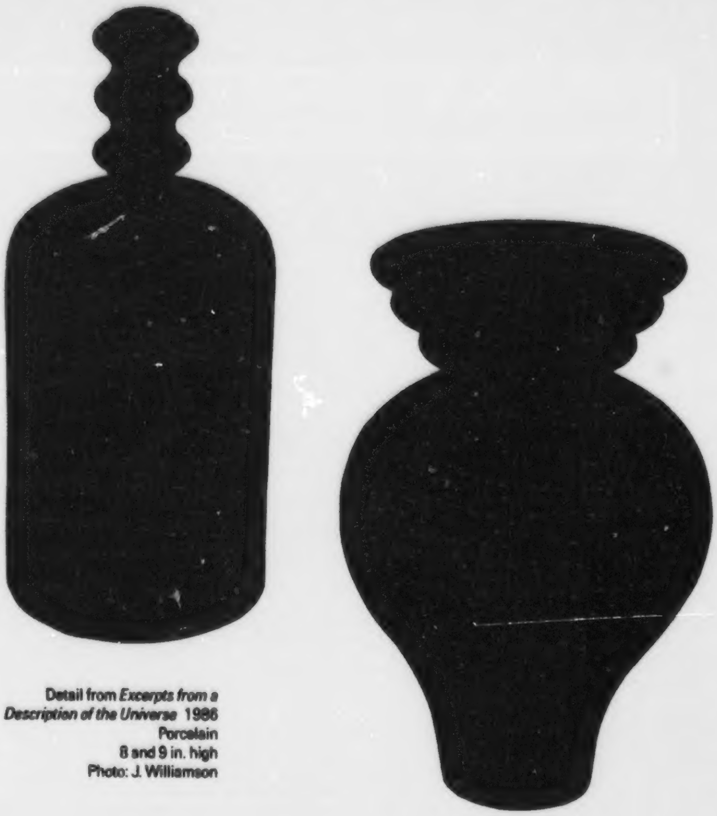
But perhaps even more impressive is his wonderfully various use of materials, from lead, cast iron, ceramic, and steel to



Foot 1988
Cast steel
17 in. high
Photo: J. Williamson

hair, fabric and carbon — most of which he sets about mastering himself. Some of his most arresting works, those dealing with hair and the top of the head, fashion hair into odd hat-like shapes. Others thread hair through the surface of the table like bristles through the back of a brush. In these works, Dean is thinking about hair as a kind of drapery for the top of the body, and of the way the top of the body — the head — acts as a sign for the whole. Other head pieces have a wedge-like shape, articulating our sense of the human body as a form propelled through space, equipped only to see in front of itself. ("Most of our cultural artefacts are shaped by the fact that we have a front and a back.") Other forms seem to deal with the distinctions between male and female gender.

In none of this, as Dean is quick to point out, does he set out to illustrate preconceived themes. His process, having at its centre the exploration of meaning through the formal and material properties of the world, is in fact quite the opposite. In the end one can think of Dean's work as a kind of visionary physics, a morphology of the imagination in which the physical world is somehow translated from the original, reconsidered, and then reconstituted in new forms, familiar, yet not wholly recognizable.



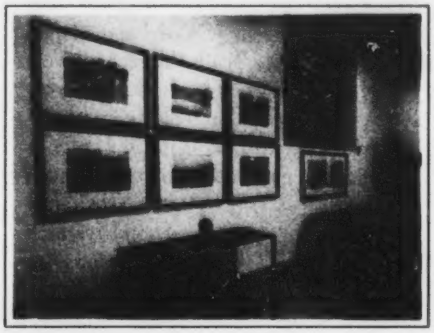
Detail from *Excerpts from a Description of the Universe* 1986
Porcelain
8 and 9 in. high
Photo: J. Williamson

Performance 1974
Tom Dean with Glendon Light
Photo: Steven Lack

Tracing personal and cultural history with Irene F. Whittome

By
Peggy
Gale

AT THE SILENT CENTRE



Portrait
Photograph
By
Alex
Meyboom

Left: Whittome in her Montreal studio
Right: Details from *Le Musée des Traces* 1989 Installation
Photos: Richard Max Tremblay

Twenty years ago, it began to look as if museums, traditionally the repositories of the past, were all washed up. History seemed too quiet, too passive even, to rival the present's insistent demands. Yet the current decade has seen a tremendous growth in the field. Stunning new buildings have been unveiled to great acclaim all over Europe and North America, and in this country, huge sums are now invested in Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto for these palaces of culture. The museum has moved from being perceived as a cobwebbed reliquary to being an active component in the debate on cultural values.

In the midst of all this discussion, Irene F. Whittome has just completed a museum for one — a unique project formally initiated in 1985 but in gestation far longer. *Le Musée des Traces* is a single installation, a collection of objects to be viewed together as a whole; it is also a junction of elements and ideas central to Whittome's production over two decades. Her original one-room site at the corner of Clark and Marie-Anne streets in Montreal was open to the public early this summer, and the Art Gallery of Ontario hopes to install the work in Toronto in the spring of 1990.

Whittome tends to produce long-term projects and series, often recycling objects and ideas in subsequent works. Perhaps "museum" is a natural metaphor to use in her work, implying preservation, esteem and removal from the quotidian. *Le Musée des Traces* is an enormous vitrine full of echoes and references, a meditation not only on our collective past and the urban cycle of demolition/construction but also on the place of the object in time.

Le Musée des Traces is serene and silent, its end both private and public. The interior space is restful, white wall surfaces articulated by dark-stained custom shelving and picture frames, by monumental objects deliberately arranged in the room's spare volume. It shows Montreal as site and source: urban centre, port, the artist's home and workplace. The museum is a sort of garden to be cultivated. Whittome has assembled images of plants and parksites, ponds and canals, using primarily her own large-format photographs as well as an ample selection from city archives that she has filed away in binders and boxes.

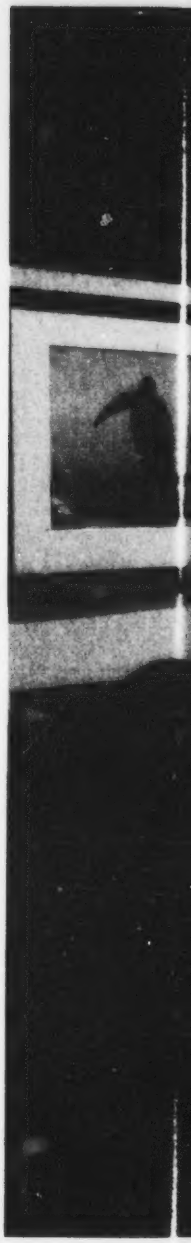
A life-sized cast of a giant turtle, an animal inhabiting both land and water, occupies a central place. At once symbolic ancestor and wild creature, it inhabits both natural and cultural realms. Iroquois legend tells of the primordial Great Turtle, bearing the earth on its back. To others the tortoise was a symbol of the universe: its domed back was the vault of heaven, its upper shell markings a mirror of the universe, and the creature's great age a sign for immortality. For Whittome, the turtle has acquired private symbolic meaning as an allegorical, somehow tragic figure, its immense size and stamina paired with its vulnerability to human destruction, its religious significance in other cultures seen against its decorative geometry and structural beauty.

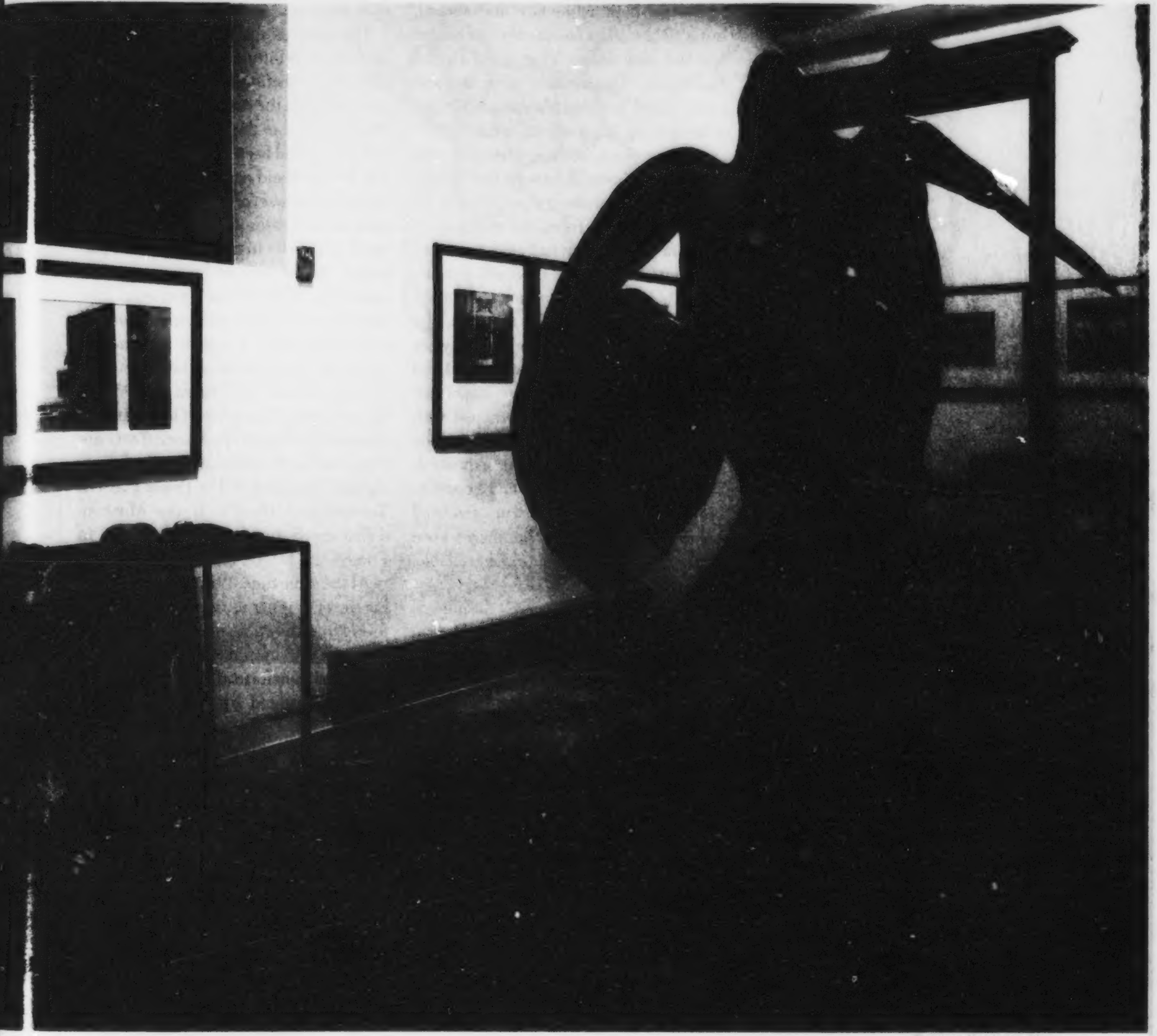
Whittome placed her turtle at the pivot point of the installation; nine feet long and balanced unnaturally upright, it points heavenward to dominate the tall, narrow room. Arranged on side tables are several small turtle objects: a bronze sculpture from 18th-century Japan, an iron trivet, a Navajo drinking cup, a mask from Zaire, a drawing by the artist — the record of a dream — superimposed over a photograph of Death Valley. On the opposite wall are ancient Spanish jars for carrying water, the rough clay ovoids recalling the turtle's shape and color as much as their relationship to water and human use.

Whittome herself is both research scholar and intuitive seer in equal measure. Until recently she taught at Concordia University in Montreal, and her experience as a teacher accustomed her to framing her intentions in words. Yet the long hours of private work, the elongated periods needed for fabrication and finishing, or for seeking "found" objects to be transformed, have given her a great capacity for introspection.

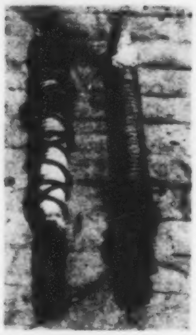
Found object from *Le Musée des Traces*
Dessous de plat en forme de tortue
Bronze, c.1940
7½ x 5½ in.
Photo: Richard Max Tremblay

After Whittome graduated from the Vancouver School of Art, she studied and worked with Stanley Hayter at his Atelier 17 print workshop in Paris for some years. She returned to Canada in 1968 to teach at Concordia. Her early exhibitions, all graphic works, had significant





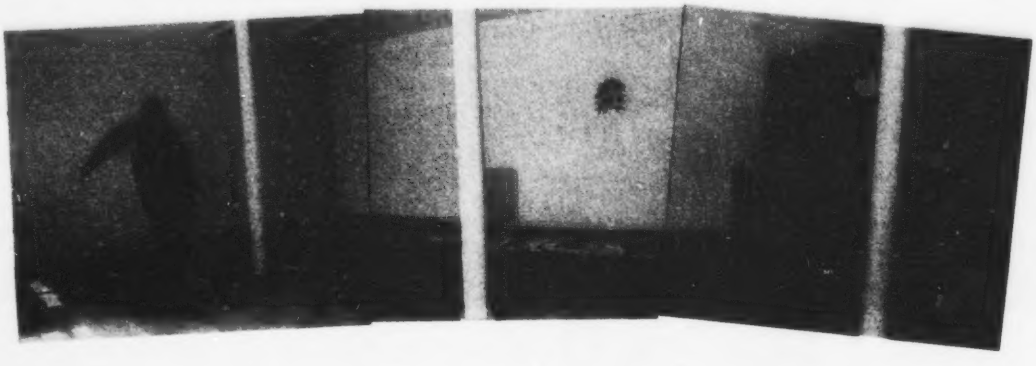
Detail, *Le Musée des Traces*
Photo: Richard Max Tremblay



Detail, *Le Musée des Traces*
Musée Blanc: figure masculine
et figure féminine 1975
Metal, cloth, wax
18 x 2 ½ x 2 in.
Photo: Marilyn Aitken

responses both nationally and abroad, but a 1972 visit to *Documenta* 5 in Kassel sparked new ideas. That year, Harald Szeemann, *Documenta*'s director and curator, had installed *Museums by Artists*, a fascinating glimpse into artists' interests, diversions, source materials and working methods. Whittome had herself been collecting ordinary but pleasing little objects — test tubes, for example, or machine parts — and had placed some of them into boxes with one open or transparent side. After *Documenta*, she turned aside from graphic works toward sculpture, while at the same time affirming her pleasure in handcraft. Between 1974 and 1976 she completed five important pieces, series of tall rods wrapped with miles of cord and string that she called *The White Museum*. As she explained, "The objects are wrapped and bound to conceal their original form, removed behind glass to isolate the images even further to finally produce a nonavailable, rare, curious quality."

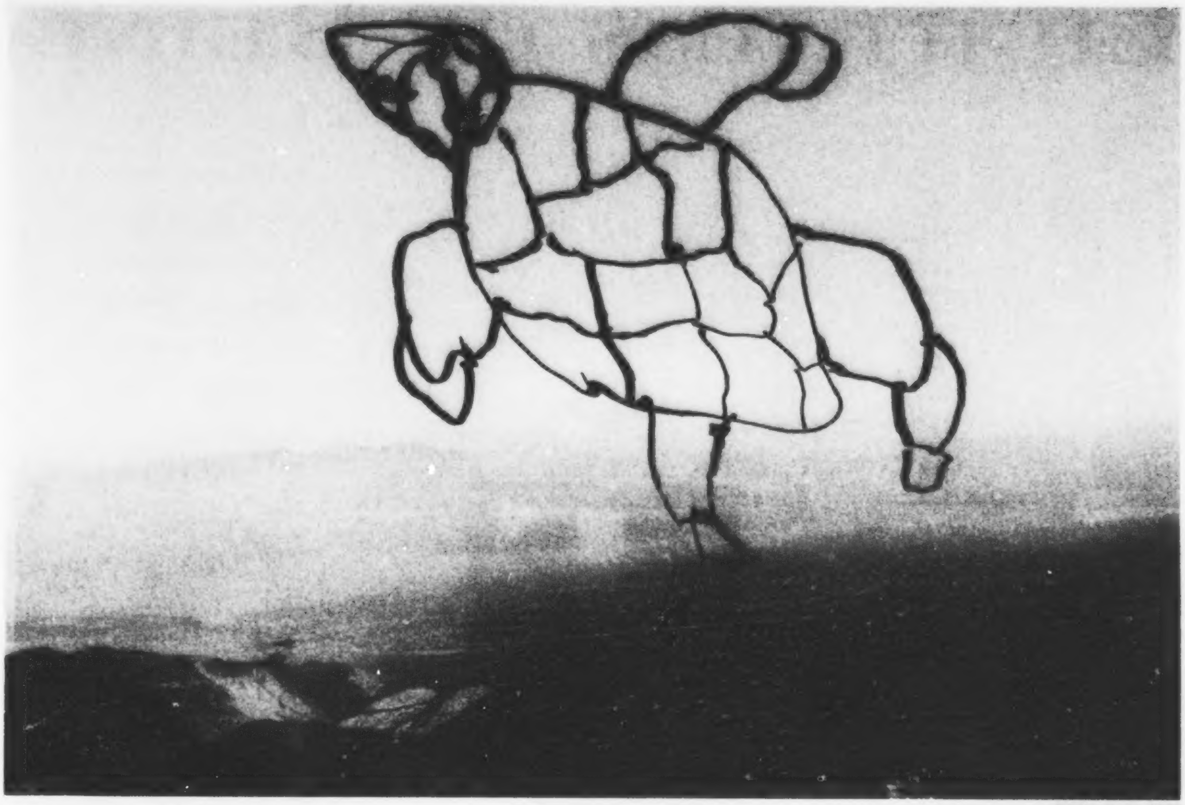
Canadian anthropologist Jacqueline Fry has published several studies on Whittome's sculpture and installation work (most recently, *Le Musée des Traces d'Irene F. Whittome*, Editions Parachute, 1989) and was the curator for a major exhibition of her work at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 1980. Fry has noted how Whittome loves the silence and contemplative quality of the museum, the isolation of objects that creates a vision of the ideal. For Whittome, the museum and its traditional display cases are a haven for the work of art, setting the work apart as a sign of its completion.



Ho T'u 1988
Installation
99 sq. ft.
Photo: Robert Legendre

The impetus for *Le Musée des Traces* arose from Whittome's discovery in late 1985 of a collection of building stones in a lot alongside the Autoroute Ville-Marie. They came from the Craig Street Terminus, which had been demolished to make way for the bland new Palais de Congrès. Stones, of course, are ideal "traces," permanent witnesses to history that also speak of the city in transition. These particular stones were to become the first collection in Whittome's museum. She acquired her second generative element, a fibreglass copy of a giant leather-back sea turtle, from a mold at the Museum of Natural Science in Ottawa in 1986. It figured centrally in a trio of installations: *Illuminati* (1987) at the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal, and in the following year, *Shamash* at The Power Plant in Toronto and *Ho T'u* at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de La Rochelle in France.

At the same time, Whittome was forming the idea of her museum. In 1986, she found and leased a site for three years. The space, a disused garage and loading dock, was transformed over the following months. Inspired by the 18th-century Cabinet de Curiosités, a private and often idiosyncratic collection of objects, the museum was to be Whittome's frame. She wrote, "The museum intervenes as a fictional space; it is imagined as visitable but has no need to be visited. An institutional space for receiving gathered objects, a place for putting in order, for collection and conservation, in this proj-



Mother Turtle 1986
Drawing superimposed on photograph
13 x 9 in.

ect occupying the proposed space is a necessary and logical pretext."

Whittome constructed this museum from a lifetime's experience — labor both physical and psychological — and it travels with her, just as the turtle carries his shell. Other objects in the room's centre underline this mobility. Two tall metal figurines, for example, with iron cutting tools wire-mounted at their summits, and a single upright form in cloth and wood from the string-wrapped *White Museum* of the 1970s, are placed on separate steel platforms with carrying handles, resembling stretchers ready to be moved, or already in transit.

Le Musée des Traces recalls an old-fashioned ethnographic museum, glassed cases silent, each item evoking an exotic elsewhere. But whereas those museums were fixed, closed, stable, Whittome's is open, fluid, portable, a blend of personal and cultural history. Just as the sea turtle circles constantly between Europe and the two Americas, Whittome's constructions and images remain in motion, playing different roles in the course of their history.

Whittome operates in grand cycles, repeating and reconfiguring elements in her work. Her next project, a film, is a direct outgrowth of *Le Musée des Traces* and will consist of an extended scanning of the masonry in the abandoned Canal des Soulanges (the photographs of which are included in the *Musée*). Whittome's return to the museum was in many ways a confirmation of her roots. Growing up in the British Columbia interior, she and her sister were for a time the only white children in a Haida Indian school. And from art school, she particularly remembers painter and teacher Jack Shadbolt, whose expressive paintings of masks and whose philosophy on native imagery and art were her strongest influence. (Her *Drawings, 1963-1988 — A Tribute to Jack Shadbolt* was shown at Musée d'art de Joliette this summer.) Her museum, then, becomes the place of the unconscious, a valuation of personal and cultural past, a fidelity to experience, a shrine and a comfortable place. Other artists resonate here too. The Gothic shamanism that speaks so powerfully through the drawings, sculpture and installation works of Joseph Beuys; the Amazon ritual objects and framed landscapes constructed or photographed by Lothar Baumgarten; or even James Coleman's elaborate tableaux enacted through complex slide-sound installations — all find faint echo here. But Irene F. Whittome follows her own path. Her museum is completed. She is released.

LIGHTNESS OF BEING

**IN HIS ROLE AS BOTH
PHOTOGRAPHER AND
BOOK DESIGNER,
MICHAEL TOROSIAN
TURNS THE
PHOTOGRAPHIC
PORTRAIT INTO AN
ARTIFACT**

Toronto Suite by Michael Torosian is a collection of portraits featuring 24 artists who have been associated with Toronto art dealer Av Isaacs over the 34 years that Isaacs has been selling contemporary Canadian painting and sculpture. The photographs that make up *Toronto Suite* were exhibited in May at the Isaacs Gallery, in concert with the launch of a limited edition book of the same name produced by Torosian under his own imprint, Lumiere Press. Illustrated with superb duotone reproductions of all the artists' portraits, the book also contains a nicely anecdotal text by art historian Dennis Reid.

It's logical that a fascination with the art Torosian saw at the Isaacs Gallery over the years would lead him to a fascination with the creators of that art. These are men and women who have been around, who have fully evolved personalities, people like Joyce Wieland and Graham Coughtry, Gordon Rayner and Michael Snow. They've done important work in the visual world and they're just plain damned interesting — "an extraordinary gallery of human beings," as Torosian says, "a fabulous set of craniums." This particular set of great craniums finally impelled Torosian to spend the time necessary to produce one of the finest bodies of documentary portraiture to appear in recent years. These beautifully made, honest, intelligent pictures don't rely on gonzo lenses, weird lighting and wacko camera angles to achieve haunting, poignant portrayals of their subjects. *Toronto Suite* works because a skilled photographer has responded to an urge to contemplate and chronicle a

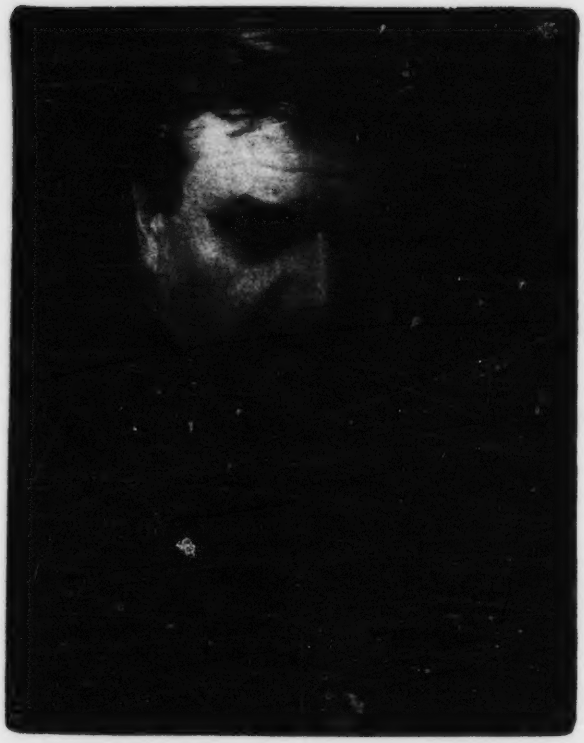
JOHN REEVES

MICHAEL TOROSIAN

BY JOHN REEVES

TOROSIAN PORTRAITS COURTESY THE ISAACS GALLERY

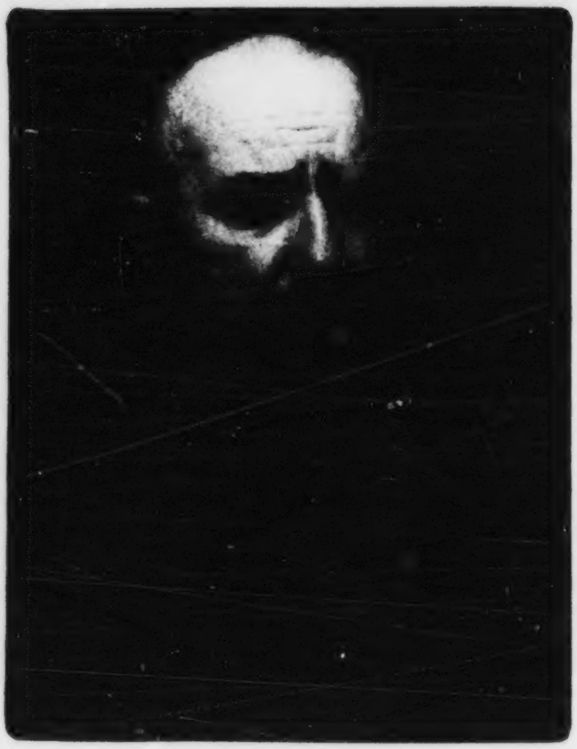
JOYCE WIELAND



GORDON RAYNER

JOHN MEREDITH

MARK PRENT



WALTER REDINGER

splendid hunk of contemporary Canadian art history.

Torosian began to feel a special connectedness between the art of the photograph and the art of the book early in his career. Unlike other visual arts (painting and sculpture, for example), which must frequently be reduced in size for book-scaled presentation, cameras tend to produce book-friendly images that measure in inches rather than feet. Photography has naturally entwined itself with the book from its earliest beginnings, when the British photographic pioneer, Henry Fox Talbot, made his first successful negative-to-positive photograph image in 1835 and contrived to publish the first photographically illustrated book, *The Pencil of Nature*, in 1844.

WHILE LUMIERE PRESS BOOKS ARE RELATED IN SIZE AND GENERAL STYLE, EACH ONE HAS UNIQUE TYPOGRAPHY AND BINDING

MIKE VISSER

Michael Torosian is a photographer with a strong attraction to the craft aspects of his discipline. It's not surprising, therefore, that he was also drawn to what he saw as the related crafts entailed in bookmaking. His interest in the conjunction of photographs and books developed into something of an obsession. For three years he studied bookbinding at night while he taught himself typographical design, typesetting and letter-press printing.

Torosian established Lumiere Press in 1980, a small private press dedicated to producing limited numbers of beautifully made, carefully considered books for an audience who ideally would be attracted not only to his scholarly and journalistic ideas but also to his own photography.

His first book was a typographic whimsy called *Lunarglyphics* (1981), but by 1986 Torosian had arrived at a very refined sense of what a Lumiere Press book should be, both physically and editorially. Since 1986, the Homage series books have all measured a standard 6¼ by 9¼ inches. They all feature at least one handmade, "tipped-in" photo print (a painstaking process in which the photograph is glued to the surface of the page). While most of the other Lumiere books vary somewhat in size and general style, the Homage series is unique in its uniform typographic detailing, the choice of materials for the bindings and the selection of papers to carry the text. Lumiere Press books are printed in limited editions (usually 150 copies) that sell for $75 to $175 each. Obviously, Torosian is doing something right — nearly every book so far has been a sellout.

Editorially the books present new, unusual and unpublished literary, graphic and photographic material. Lumiere has issued three volumes that form part of an ongoing series of homages to photographers whom Torosian regards as important. To date, dues have been paid to Edward Weston (*Dedicated to Simplicity*, 1986); Michael Lambeth (*Confessions of a Tree Taster*, 1987); David Heath (*Extempore*, 1988); and Aaron Siskind (*The Siskind Variations*, due out in December). *The Ninth Street Show*, published in 1987, was a celebration of the legendary New York art dealer Leo Castelli's 80th birthday and 30th year in business, and two books, *Aurora* (1987) and *Toronto Suite*, are presentations of Torosian's own work. This summer, Lumiere Press brought out its first book of full-color reproductions, *Nostalgia for an Unknown Land*, consisting of 12 four-color plates by Rafael Goldchain and an essay by Torosian.

A society that is seriously seeking to develop a rich, resonant culture must engage in a certain amount of cultural show and tell. By the same token, a photographer is never better employed than when setting out to show us people he or she perceives to be in some way specially significant. Michael Torosian has done just that, both in his own work and in his attention to the work of others.

Dead-Tech Revisited

Medrie MacPhee's industrial poetics

By Adele Freedman

Portrait Photograph By David Laurence

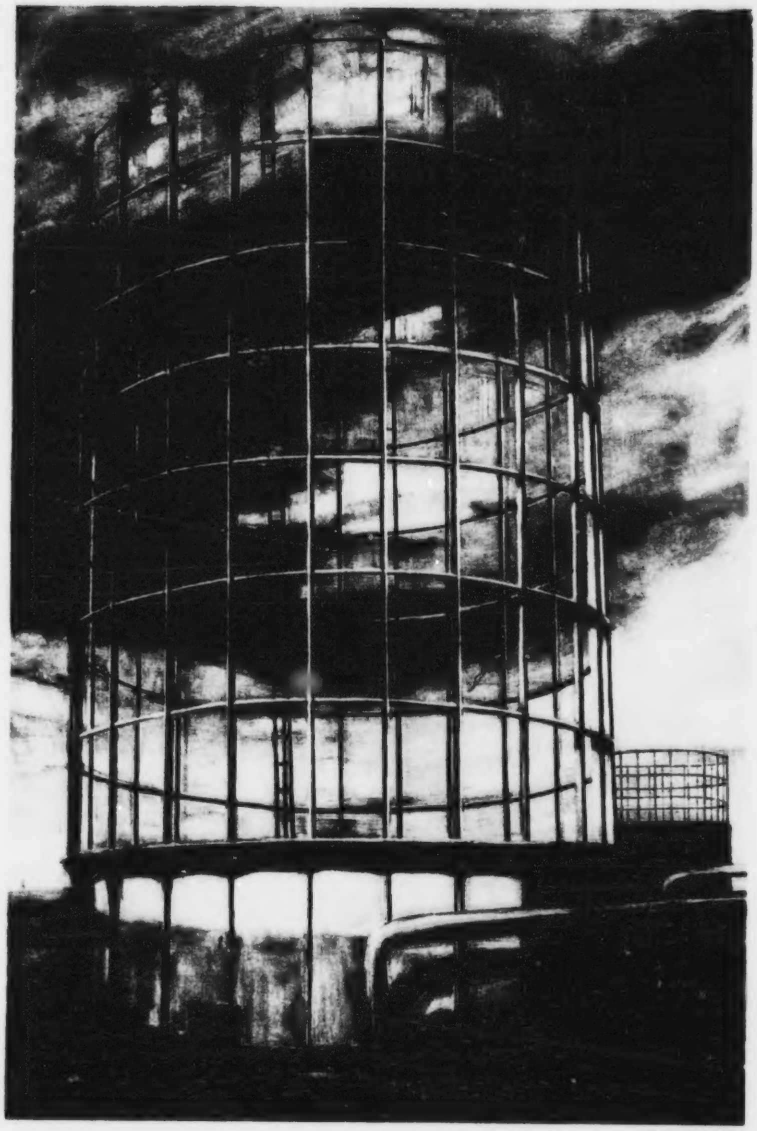
This is the way Medrie MacPhee looks, according to a self-portrait dated 1986: tall and rectangular, like an oversized phone booth. She has no face, arms, or legs. She is standing alone, by a lake, under a blue, cloud-streaked sky, mountains in the distance. Her skin has the texture of cement. She has four rectangular openings down the front. Her insides are showing. They're rounded, funnelled, metallic, fleshy: bladder, intestines, a couple of cones.

This is the way Medrie MacPhee looks in person, in 1989: she is tall and slim, with lively brown eyes, fair skin, and long, dark, softly curling hair. She is wearing black slacks, a dark shirt, and leather oxfords with no socks. "*Self-Portrait in the Mountains* is the most surreal I got," she says. "I saw it ouside the Banff Centre. I was running the summer studio [program in visual arts]. I saw it. I painted it faithfully. It's so funny that an engineer designed it for a real purpose, but inside are all the organs of a woman."

"It," in other words, is one of those relics of industrial architecture MacPhee is drawn to paint, sketch, dream, and somehow identify with. She was told "it" was a cement plant, but "the level of fantasy involved in something so functional" was the main thing. "You just have to let yourself feel it," she says. "The fundamental architecture is your own body, the relationship you have with your own body. People are always establishing relationships with what's around them."

But not everyone recognizes herself in a cement factory, or is driven to root around the very modern ruins of water towers, container piers, munitions factories, viaducts, silos and grain elevators in search of subjects for portraiture. For MacPhee's paintings of abandoned industrial installations are portraits that put flesh on the ghost in the machine. We're used to thinking of grain elevators and reservoirs in black and white, if we think of them at all. One of the shocking things about MacPhee's figures — and she has come to the point where she has "no hesitation in altering things completely; some spaces I've altered or completely made

Self-Portrait in the Mountains 1986
Oil on canvas
63 x 90 in.



Reservoir 1987
Oil on canvas
63 x 90 in.

up" — is their butcher-shop colors; carnal hues of pink, purple, blue. Always shown in isolation, they are situated at some strange crossroads where industrial and animal, male and female, meet.

MacPhee, "from Edmonton and Vancouver," has been painting architecture, in some form or another, ever since she started to paint. That was at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, where she studied in the mid-'70s before moving to New York in 1976. Among the "hardcore group of painters" she discovered there were Eric Fischl, Mira Schor and Robert Berlind. She painted portraits — "it was not the party line, but I wanted to learn how to paint" — and, on the side, she "started using architecture." The two preoccupations converged, and there have been other developments besides.

MacPhee's paintings from the '70s and early '80s, which go by such names as *Empty Corridors*, *Revolving Doors*, and *Pool*, show the influence of de Chirico, Edward Hopper, and photo-realism. They have a dreamy, surrealistic quality, and hint at MacPhee's fascination for secret spaces and mysterious openings, in most cases, windows. They look like Early Works. As she moved onwards, and outwards, to paint staircases, tunnels, bridges, and railway stations, her images became even sharper and starker.

Premonitions of complexity — of something personal, softer, and more diffuse — crept into her work around 1984, with canvases such as *East Meets West* (a bridge) and *Chambers* (a viaduct). By 1986, portraits of industry had become an obsession, and she became more concerned with paint and surface, and with integrating figure and background. "I wanted to separate myself from Charles Sheeler and Charles Demuth," she says, referring to the American artists known as Precisionists. "That wasn't my interest. Now my work reads much more like characters. Architecture has become a metaphor."

The "industrial stuff," as she puts it, is only a starting point. MacPhee goes to a site, draws it, returns to her studio with the drawings and some photographs. There her fantasy takes over. "I only saw the machines," she says of *Alchemy*, a 1987 canvas in which the innards of a machine remotely suggest a cathedral. "The rest was added. I drew, redrew, and started thinking of a context that would work with it. When you're very small, your parents install an architecture into you. You spend the rest of your life trying to find the dimensions of that particular metaphor."

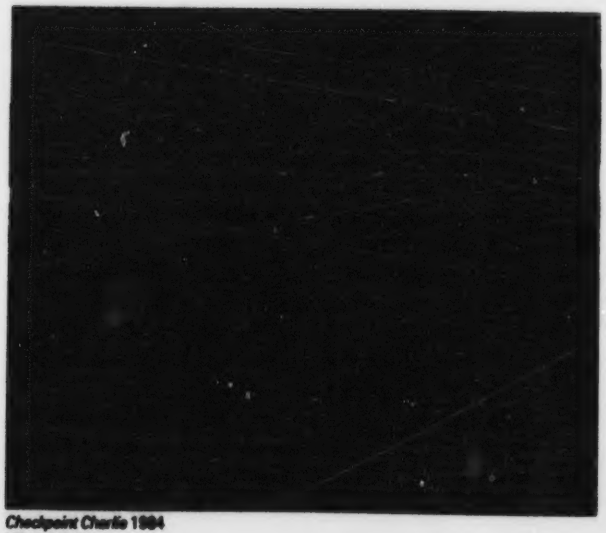
One of those dimensions emerged as technique: MacPhee has begun to sew and piece together her canvases. The idea came by accident. She was working on a drawing, and felt she "wanted three or four inches more in one place, and so I tacked it in." She continued to construct her drawings in this way, rearranging and extending space as she felt the need. Later, the same need arose when MacPhee was at work on a painting: " 'Do I dare sew a piece in? How tacky!' But I did. I cut and moved pieces. Sometimes I glue pieces on top to get an edge. It's all very labor-intensive."

But it does interesting things to a canvas, particularly one that supports an architectural image, however metaphorical. Designing a canvas by cutting and moving pieces around is an activity that resonates with the way architecture is made — an analogue of buildings — and, in particular, with the ageing, historical stuff to which she is attracted: layered time, layered space, layered canvas. Though that's not the way MacPhee sees it. For her, rearranging canvas signifies randomness: "I bring in chaos. It's as if I'm not totally in charge. I'm trying to be looser. A painting evolves and finishes at the same time," she says.

How MacPhee will evolve and finish is another matter. She's 36, and she has spent the last three years immersed in her humanoid fantasies of gawky, ghostly machines. "Some of what has drawn me to architecture is very clear to me," she says. "I've always loved architecture. The reason I moved to New York was that I loved the way the city looked — dramatic changes in scale, death and rebirth, the fantasy element. These sites I go to, they're secret places, in a way. They embody the feeling of heroic fiction. Now there's a kind of pathos about it, something very compelling. They're deteriorating."

Critics have picked up on that aspect of MacPhee's imagery, but she would prefer not to be bound by it: "I'm doing it as I see it and feel it. It's not that I have an axe to grind. Expressing a sense of abandonment isn't my driving intention. They're more about relationships. In a poem by Adrienne Rich, she talks about a raft floating between abstract worlds. They're good vehicles to express things I feel about being alive now. I find them abstractly and formally very compelling, but that's not enough. It gives me an opportunity to disappear into that scene. A painting is like a container for all those things. You can't nail it down. I love the imagery a lot, but also the fact that it comes through your body. The way you put strokes on...it's kinetic. Why industry and not people, or landscape? It doesn't seem that important to me, almost." Formerly a cement factory, MacPhee now sees herself as a visionary-in-progress.

Secrets 1989
Oil on canvas
72 x 62 in.
Collection: University of Alberta



Checkpoint Charlie 1984
Oil on canvas
72 x 62 in.
Collection: University of Alberta

THE BEAUTY OF

By Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker

THE WEAPONS

Stan Douglas does battle with the armies of the modernist night

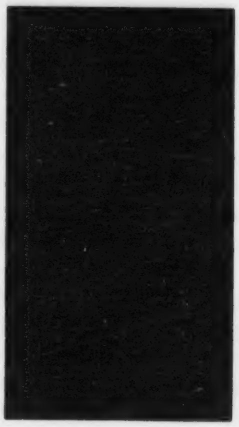
Two harsh tungsten lights high above the empty parking lot flood the surroundings as if in search of prisoners. Inside a shabby temporary booth, the attendant sits reading a newspaper. Constant electrical buzzing from the lights makes it hard to concentrate. Suddenly the lights go out. The unexpected silence surprises the attendant, who looks up.

Vancouver artist Stan Douglas's 15-second television spot *Lit Lot* cuts to late-night commercial TV. In an art gallery context it has a cool, intellectual appeal. On broadcast television, however, this short, undramatic narrative about working shatters all our entertainment conventions. Repeated several times throughout the evening, it becomes almost aggressive — an annoying, frustratingly repetitive intrusion.

There are 12 *Television Spots* (1987-88). The camera work is reassuringly familiar — classic shots from the history of cinema. The content, on the other hand, is unexpected in its ordinariness. In *Sneeze* a woman in a featureless underground parking lot stops — and sneezes. The *Spectated Man* fusses with his lapels and the fading creases in his pants, obviously aware of being watched. In *Musical Vendor* an ice-cream wagon drives beside a park in a light-industrial area of East Vancouver. *Male Naysayer*, a lifeguard with extraordinarily good posture, says "no" near the showers of an outdoor pool.

Douglas explores that zone of being that Irish playwright Samuel Beckett describes as "unusable," as something by definition incompatible with art. Douglas makes art about what is absent from history, given that, as he wrote in the catalogue for *Samuel Beckett: Teleplays*, "the heroic ...identity is always gendered male, classed bourgeois, and of European descent."

Douglas is best known for his installations: *Panoramic Rotunda* (1985), *Onomatopoeia* (1985/86) and *Overture* (1986). In them he resurrects abandoned 19th-century technologies of the spectacle — the panorama, the automated player piano and archival film footage — and wrenches them back to familiar territory. The panorama, for example, was a fulfilment of the 19th-century desire to be enveloped in artifice that resembles nature. Crowds of spectators could gaze upon a continuous landscape painted onto the circular walls of a rotunda. A century and numerous visual technologies later, Douglas folded open the *Panoramic Rotunda*, its four concave photographic panels mounted on intrusive wooden armatures, black-and-white pictures of a childhood swamp dissected and pinned back for examination.



Far left: Still from
Subject to a Film 1988
16mm B&W film
5 min., 15 sec.
Left: *Overture* 1986
Projection stand, 16mm projector, speaker

In *Onomatopoeia* a large-scale slide-dissolve sequence is synchronized to, and

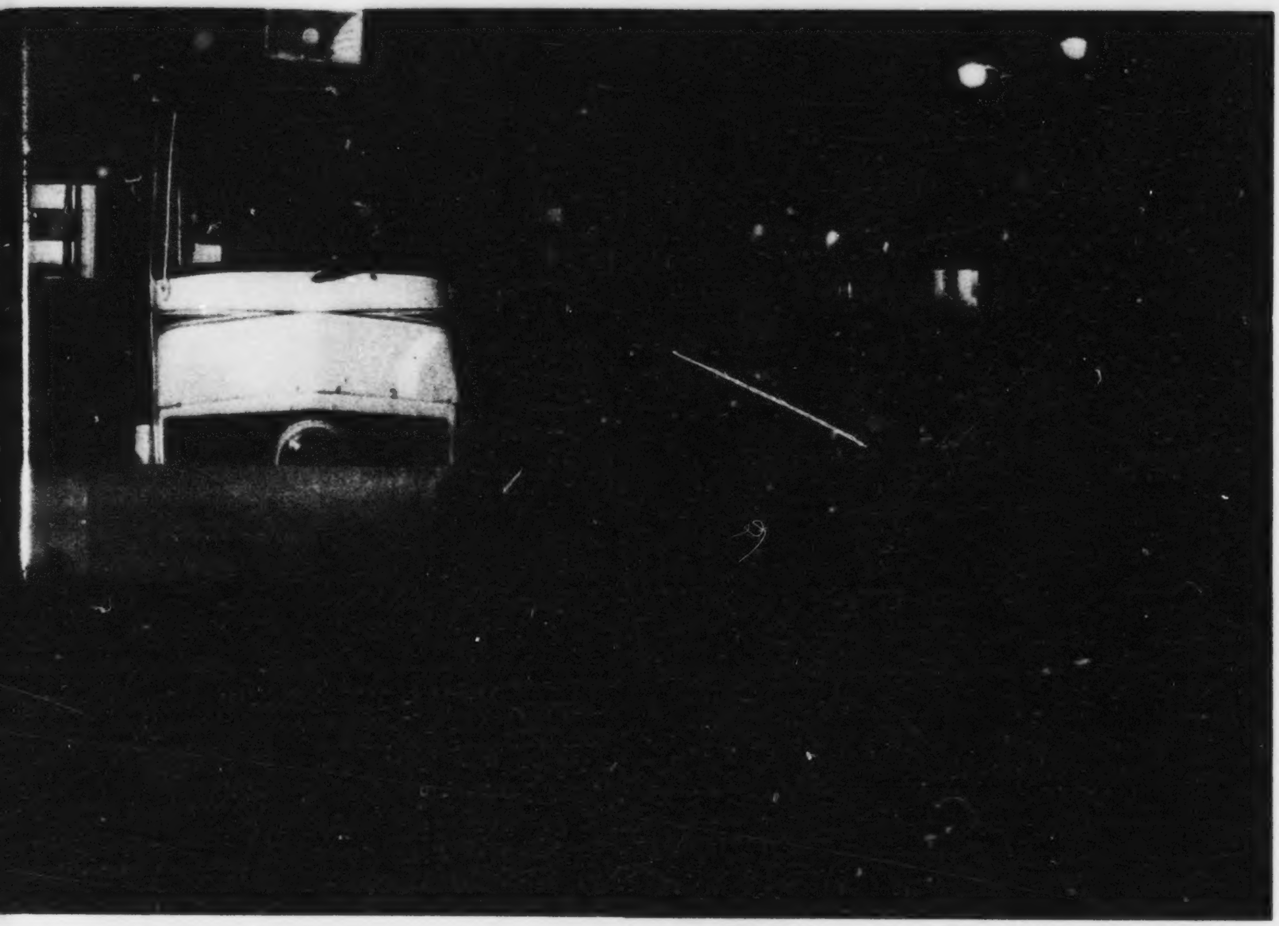
Clockwise from top left: *Female Naysayer*,
Musical Vendor, *Lit Lot*, *Box Office*
Male Naysayer, *Spectated Man*,
Stills from *Television Spots*, 1987-88
1-in. color videotape
10-30 sec. each

projected above, a player piano performing a section of a Beethoven sonata. The images hovering above the piano are from a wool mill near Douglas's former home: weaving machines, rolls of punch cards and traces — abandoned tools, family pictures and fingerprints — of the factory workers themselves.

In fact, the 19th-century technology governing automated weaving machines is identical to that of the player piano — the binary system punched into endless rolls of card. It is contemporary technology, however, that governs the installation. The slide unit choreographing the images is controlled by a synchronizing device, its code inscribed on the player piano music roll. This contradiction between elegaic nostalgia and the contemporary gives *Onomatopoeia* a complexity and disjunction, which is further compounded by the fact that one episode of the monumental Beethoven sonata selected by Douglas sounds remarkably like ragtime jazz.

If *Onomatopoeia* creates an image of increasing human absence in both industry and culture, *Overture* addresses memory and the uncertain subjectivity that surrounds historical events. In a darkened room the disembodied voice of a male narrator floats from a black projection box. Film footage, shot from a train travelling through the Rocky Mountains between 1899 and 1901, is projected onto the wall. There are six segments; each begins with the train emerging from a tunnel and ends when it enters the next. The image and the narration seem to slip in and out of consciousness, continuously repeating themselves.

The train's precious cargo is bourgeois culture from Europe. Its passage along fragile wooden trestles suspended over precipices is testimony that the West can be tamed, that nature can be mastered. Such mastery is, however, denied the narrator. He repeatedly recollects confused moments between sleeping and waking, a traveller in a foreign place watching in the dark for signs of the familiar. We become confused with him, disoriented in the periodic silences of the tunnel. The words being spoken are obviously from a literary text; we recognize we are in the presence of high culture. But it is distorted, turned in on itself, transformed. Even those who recognize the narration as fragments from the first 10 pages of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps*

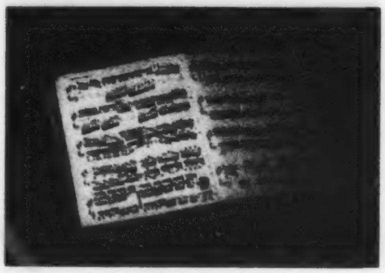


perdu are confused, unsure. The language of Europe has arrived, but in a state of anxious uncertainty.

Ambivalent to high art, Douglas rewrites it. He takes existing cultural forms — Proust's writing, archival film — and alters them. In his most recent work, *Subject to a Film*, he replicates and modifies Hitchcock's *Marnie*, and in a collaborative play, *Link Fantasy*, written with Deanna Ferguson and published by Artspeak Gallery, Vancouver, in 1988, Douglas altered classic texts on the theme of the archetypal femme fatale. Intertwined are edited and rewritten excerpts from the early 20th-century play *Lulu* by German expressionist Frank Wedekind, an opera of the same name by Alban Berg, and G.W. Pabst's film version, *Pandora's Box*.

This strategy of rewriting and transforming text was inherent in the originals. Wedekind first wrote *Spirit of the Earth* and *Pandora's Box* in 1902. Rewritten in 1906, the two plays were combined under the title *Lulu* in 1913. Filmmaker Pabst released *Pandora's Box* in 1934, and in 1937 in Zurich, *Lulu*, an opera by Berg, received its premiere.

Traditionally Lulu has been seen as a wild beauty whose raw sexuality breaks down men's protective barricades. At first merely infatuated, the men become addicted. For Wedekind, however, Lulu was essentially passive, a victim of the fantasies and projections of those around her, and it is this interpretation Douglas and Ferguson adopt. In *Link Fantasy*, the master of ceremonies, illuminated by a spotlight, describes Lulu with her green lace skirt, a handsbreadth of filigree, and



Above: Book of Beethoven's sonatas,
open to *Opus 111*, bars 49-64
Soundtrack for *Onomatopoeia*
Right: *Onomatopoeia* 1985-86
Player piano, slide projections
and music roll
Approx. 6 min.

"a day twenty-four duelling scars long." Lulu, her back to the audience, explains that "the body never knows which is colder, water or a knife." In a world where woman is a screen for the projection and desires of others, even her own body cannot be trusted to distinguish different sensations.

In his fascination with psychology and literature, and in his use of looped and rewritten texts, Douglas has much in common with fellow Vancouver artist Rodney Graham. Similarity in their work, however, is limited to technical devices. Vancouver modernists like Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace and Graham have an intense awareness of history (especially art history) and an unquestioning trust in their place in it. Douglas, the other, the outsider, and the world he populates have no such trust. Although Douglas is often grouped with these artists, he rejects heroic modernism and its emphasis on mastery and rationalism, on authority and extreme academism. In a recent text, he argues that heroic modernism, resplendent with self-conviction, only replicates what it seeks to criticize.

Douglas's ambivalent participation in high European culture, and his desire to subvert it, is shared by feminist artists and theoreticians — and by Samuel

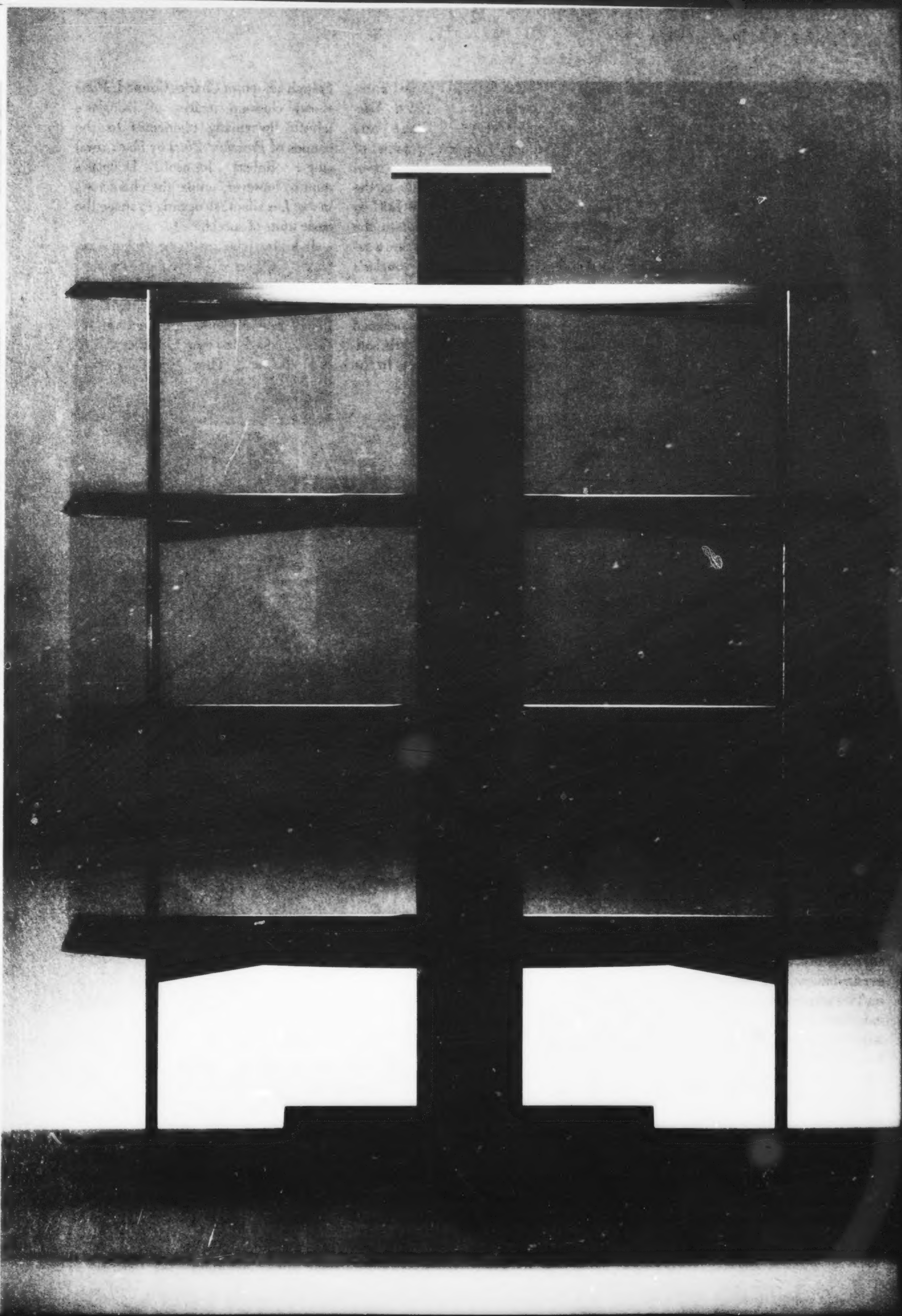
Beckett. In 1988 Douglas curated a travelling exhibition *Samuel Beckett: Teleplays*. An ambitious project three years in the making, *Teleplays* consists of works by Beckett that have been recorded on film and video. One of the teleplays, *Not I* (made by the BBC in 1977), addresses issues central to the playwright's concerns. It also bears a superficial resemblance to one of Douglas's early works, *Two Devises*. In the original stage production of *Not I* a human mouth appears, suspended above a blackened stage. Words spew forth — on birth, solitude, silence, fear, guilt and loss. In the BBC production, described by Linda Ben-Zvi in the Beckett *Teleplays* catalogue, the mouth appears in close-up. Lips, teeth, saliva and tongue, almost pornographic, fill the screen.

Still from *Subject to a Film* 1988
16mm B&W film
5 min., 15 sec.

Two Devises, produced by Douglas in 1982-83, consists of a two-part slide presentation, each juxtaposed with a musical recording. In *Breath*, typewritten translations accompany a 19th-century song by French composer Charles Gounod. *Mime* shows close-up images of Douglas's mouth lip-syncing phonemes to the sounds of *Preachin' Blues* by black rural singer Robert Johnson. Douglas's mouth, however, unlike the character's in *Not I*, is silent, struggling to shape the basic units of speech.

In his introduction to the Beckett catalogue, Douglas vividly evokes the playwright's theatrical Wasteland. Its characters, Douglas writes, "persistently insufficient first persons," are uncertain of their language and therefore uncertain of their being. "[They] seem to await silence or death but in fact seldom come to rest and even more rarely stop talking: persistent in their desire for something not yet said or not yet done."

Douglas's world and his characters are just as uncertain. In *Link Fantasy* one of the characters, Schön, asks of Lulu, "What she is?" Entering the room he answers his own question: "What she is, is absent."

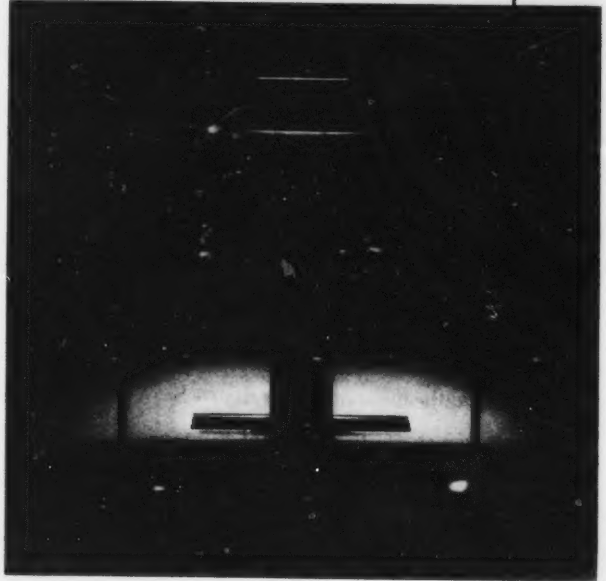


STEELWORKER

The furniture of sculptor John McKinnon

"The furniture I make is separate from my sculpture, and yet I think it performs in the same way as sculpture in that it has focus...nothing else seems to matter when you look at it. The Stella console in particular has a very sharp focus — you see it as a single gestalt. With the furniture there is no lessening of the intensity compared to the sculpture I make, though I tend to deny a good deal of what is in me sculpturally so that I have to wrestle the furniture down and end up surprising myself. If that suppression doesn't happen, it starts moving into the whole craft area.

"Basically, my pieces are additive constructions, linked structurally so that they betray a formally familial feeling. The console is based on an extended ellipse, which also shows up in the lamp as an ellipse sliced diagonally out of the back. The shelving unit came out of this ellipse too, except that the shelf ends have been blunted. All the works are analogous to the body system, the main visual aspect being the spine up the centre of the structure. As historically allusive pieces, influenced somewhat by the French designer Pierre Chareau, the works are the antithesis of pop pieces like those of the Memphis designers. They afford visual comfort, which is perhaps the crucial difference between furniture, which provides casual comfort, and sculpture, which need not."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY [illegible]

JACK GOLDSTEIN

Epiphany as white noise

Remember those Spielberg movies a few years ago where everyone was always staring at brightly lit, larger-than-life phenomena: Richard Dreyfuss and the *E.T.* kids fixating on mother ships; nuclear families frozen by ghosts inside their TVs? Bright lights, insipid plots — and gobs of spectacle. That was the spirit of the age — the audience watching a version of itself overwhelmed by light and catastrophe. Too glamorous for words. About the time *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) appeared, the world of high art began developing its own Spielberg equivalent, Jack Goldstein, 43, the painter of the spectacle in our times. ◆ Goldstein paints modern moments of cataclysmic epiphany: lightning bolts over Kansas; Turneresque zygote explosions resembling clouds over the China Sea as viewed from a 737; solar flares; jets in battle; solar eclipses, Doppler shifts and fireworks. Moments of catharsis that defy participation — moments that can only be watched — like movies. ◆ Filmmaker, performance artist, painter, Goldstein comes from an early-'80s clique that included David Salle, Cindy Sherman and Robert Longo, which "kind of criss-crossed between Mary Boone and Metro Pictures galleries." A major common link was their use of appropriated, often photo-based imagery. Curiously, Goldstein, originally from Montreal, has showed at the Tate, Leo Castelli, Holly Solomon and the Whitney (among others), but never in his native country — until this fall at the S.L. Simpson Gallery (October 6 to November 1). "I always used to apply for grants up there, but I never got them. Are they still giving out grants there these days?" He retains his Canadian citizenship but also a Green Card; a resident of New York since 1974, he lives on the sale of his works. ◆ Both critics and the great stonewashed have a field day with Goldstein's work. Not only does it address the question of our day — So What Happens Next? — in an ambiguous enough way to allow for open interpretation, but it maintains at the same time a showy, high-craftsmanship, hard-edge veneer that looks great both up close and from across a floor. "It was tough being up against expressionism. I never got collected by certain types of people." ◆ Goldstein has been working on his present style since the mid-'70s. Borrowing heavily from technological image making (infra-red sensing, electron microscopes, computer simulation), his pieces tend to have a slightly eerie, 1940s *Popular Science* flavor. The effect is

BY DOUGLAS COUPLAND

Photo: Isaac Applebaum

not dissimilar to Mark Tansey's monochrome time travellings. But rather than being just another ho-hum episode in the current epidemic of ironic, indulgent appropriation, Goldstein's pieces are quirkily, well...*life affirming* — never the hippest of laurels with which to be decked, but a laurel worthy of continued investigation. The works have a mood like that we achieved as children, when we would lie down and pretend to be dead. Despite our strongest attempts to be un-alive, our hearts continued to beat.

Goldstein has craftily implemented two changes in his recent work that allow him to circumvent the current art world fixation with cultural exhaustion — a fixation rapidly coming to resemble the German obsession with the *waldsterben*, the death of the forests. First, he has replaced culturally based images (fireworks and bombings) with those of microscopic biological happenings magnified millions of times. Second, he over-laps his works with repetitive geometric shapes that play with the notion of scale by alluding to film and the film strip. The result is that his paintings feel alingual, unconnected to any real cultural background — like a crackly print of Kubrick's *2001* poorly dubbed into Japanese viewed in a Namibian movie theatre by a French audience. All that matters is the technology — and the inevitability of life and art after a period of profound cultural torpor.

***Untitled* 1989**

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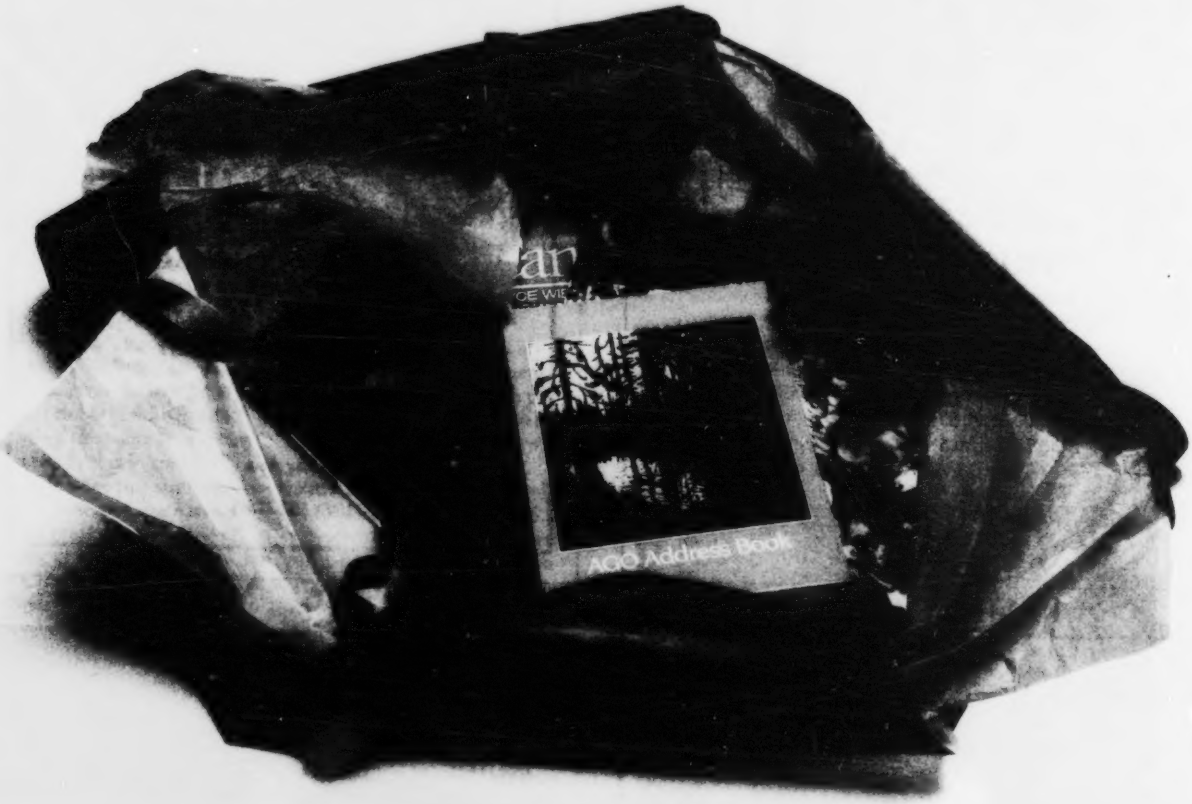
THE ART OF GIVING



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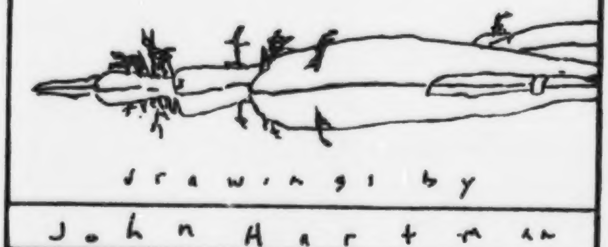

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FOCUS

ON *DOUG WALKER*

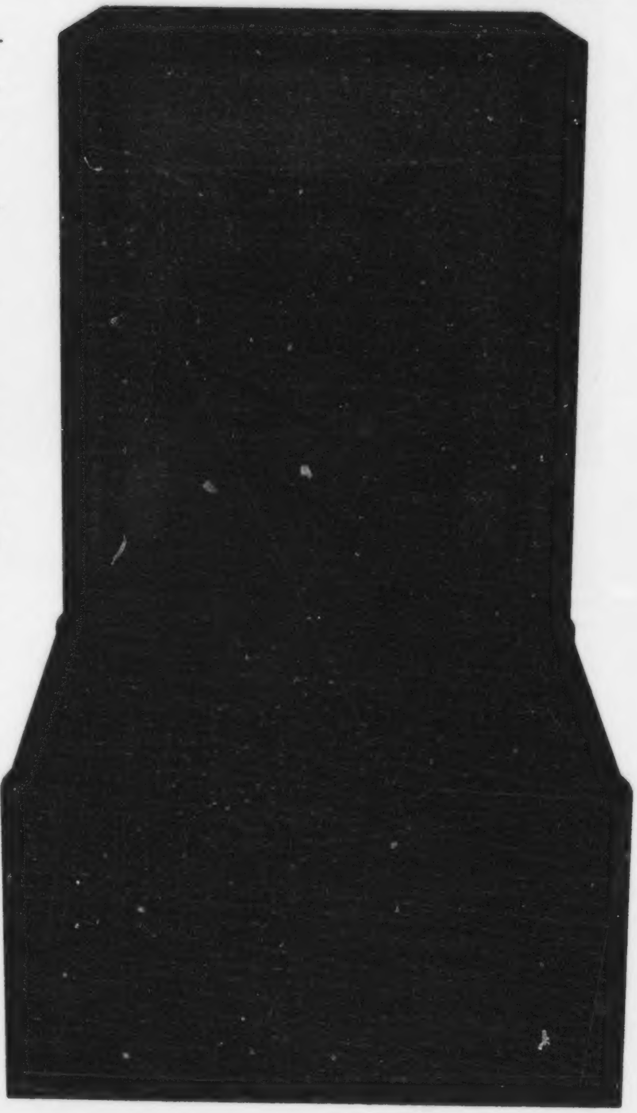
In his description of a tour through the "monuments" of Passaic, New Jersey, American artist Robert Smithson described the panorama before him as "ruins in reverse." Where once this strange reversal of time and space seemed to be present only in the industrial wastelands of New Jersey, the work of Toronto artist Doug Walker reveals it as a fundamental and pervasive characteristic of our late modern world.

In his early work of the mid-1980s, Walker explored the construction of identity, specifically the identity of white, urban, lower-class adolescents. His imagery was drawn from a well-known but unusual archive: rock'n'roll fanzines, the covers of high-school notebooks, tattoos, leather jackets and graffiti-covered walls. His works took the form of elaborately constructed, photographically based drawings that dramatically enlarged and distorted the original images. Here identity was a construct that preceded and determined the individual.

A more recent body of work from 1987-88 also used enlarged and distorted photographic images, but drawn from a broader survey of the late modern world: highways, streetlights, trains, industrial buildings, power lines, cityscapes. These subjects, despite their origins in a world characterized by speed and instantaneousness, seemed mired in the dust and detritus of an antique future. These were images of objects without a past, objects that spoke only to a future, significantly a future in ruins.

Walker's current body of work (to be shown at the S.L. Simpson Gallery from September 8 to October 4) reveals a shift away from his elaborate photo-based process toward the production or perhaps collection of objects. Walker places these objects in glass cases reminiscent of the type seen in Victorian museums. But these are not the artifacts of our Victorian past, nor are they ideal objects of a modern utopia. Instead we are given Coke caps petrified in a flow of wax, an electronic camera with its components splayed across its exterior surface, and a sculpture covered in maggots.

For Walker, the future is not an infinite and transcendent space of wondrous possibilities. On the contrary, it is a space that is marked by the ruins of our present. Where Smithson found a parallel to his ideas on time and space in the writings of novelist J.G. Ballard, Walker finds his peer in the cyberpunk writings of William Gibson. Both recognize the world as a place of hybrid activities drawn from a vast and complex archive. To designate firm divisions between the past, present and future, according to Walker, is to misunderstand the complexity of time. *Bruce Grenville*



Untitled 1989
Mixed media, display case
60 x 17 x 17 in.
Photo: Isaac Applebaum
Courtesy: S.L. Simpson

FOCUS ON *MICAH LEXIER*

Touch To Change (Micah from Babe Sarah) 1988
Laser-cut stainless steel, light bulbs, activated and intensified by viewer when words are touched
2 x 2 x 4 ft.

Meaning in representation is never absolute. It lies as much in who is reading the work as it does in who is excluded from the reading. Micah Lexier is one artist who has produced work that challenges a single reading and proposes another.

Lexier entitled his 1987 exhibition *Mr. Caldwell* after his Grade 6 public school teacher. Commemorative, ironic and poignant, the exhibition explored the transition from impressionable boyhood to idealized adulthood. A number of multimedia works (some viewer-activated) incorporated diverse elements: enlarged illustrations from a 1950s school dictionary, snippets of text, moving parts, neon and audiotaped words and sound. Each work depicts the powerful and influential relationship of a boy to a man who is both a role model and a figure of authority. In *Water Piece*, the son looks up to the father, "a fountain of information"; in *Doctor*, the young patient submits to an icy stethoscope; in *Judge*, the student sits attentively upright while the judge, gavel raised, anticipates any false move.

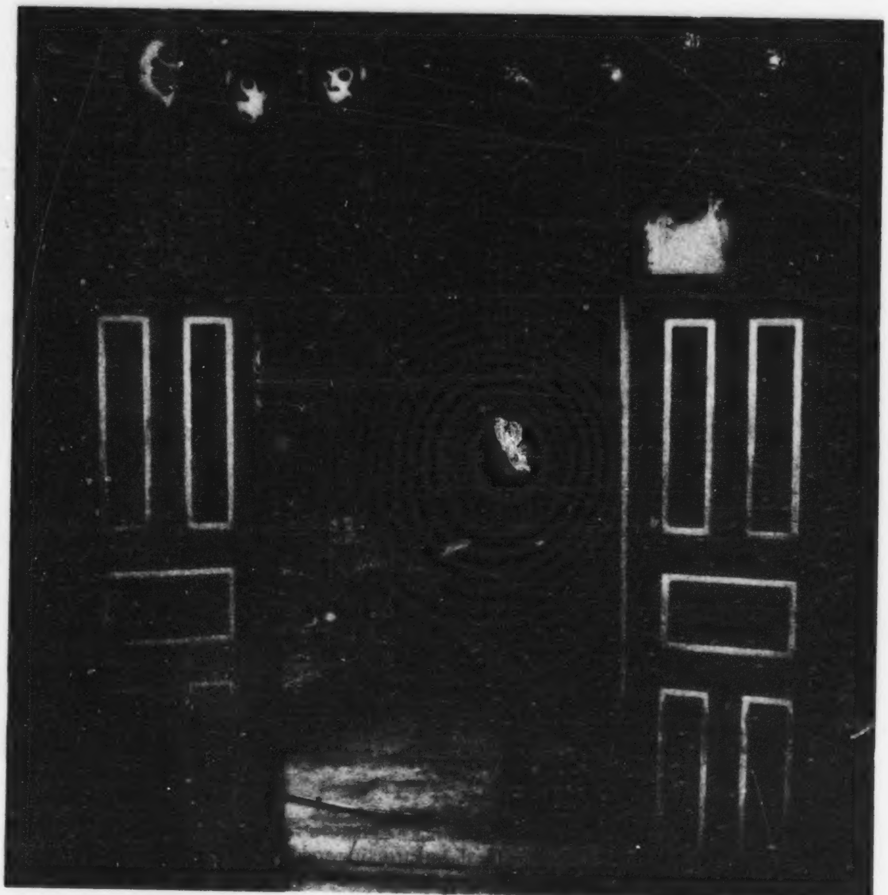
In revealing the power and anxiety in such relationships, the exhibition pointed to the obvious: education, neither innocent nor value-free, imprints the text of male identity on the boy and teaches him in a myriad subtle, and not so subtle, ways what will be expected of him as a man.

Since *Mr. Caldwell*, Lexier has continued, among a larger body of work called *To The Touch*, to make pieces that demonstrate how male identity is socially inscribed and reinforced through pictorial representation.

A number of these works have dealt with the circumstances under which men may touch and the prohibitions against touching. In *Guise (getting closer)* (1988), for example, five newspaper photographs depicted men in various stages of physical contact — from a young boy reaching for contact with the Pope, to two teenage boys in a wrestling hold. Each image was displayed behind sandblasted glass, the word "disguise" clear on its surface. A recorded excerpt from a gay male porn videotape accompanied the work. Two men negotiate contact: "I'd like to see it, show it to me," says the seducer; "Sure?" replies the other man. The audiotape and the word play of the title (guise-guys) provided a homoerotic counterpoint to the photographs, a glimpse at the desire they disguise. In presenting a gay point of view, Lexier assures that what is hidden is revealed, and that what is missing is given a presence.
Elke Town

FOCUS

ON *RAFAEL GOLDCHAIN*



The Maskmaker's Doorway, Chichicastenango, Guatemala 1986
Color coupler print
19 x 19 in.

The memory of exile creates a new reality. The place that was (and which the exile knows is no longer, because time and politics change a place and make it unrecognizable) is refashioned in the exile's mind by regret and desire. If the exile returns, the contrast between the place longed for and the place grown new creates yet another country. And this is the subject of Rafael Goldchain's photographs.

Goldchain was born in Chile of Jewish parents, moved to Israel in his youth, lived for a while in Mexico and finally settled in Canada in the mid-'70s. In 1986 and 1987 he travelled to Central America; not only Mexico but other countries he had not seen before, and his eye chose images that allowed him to keep his distance from selecting any one reality. A woman in a flowered dress stands in front of the camera. Another woman, this one painted on a photographer's backdrop, a small Virgin of Guadalupe that copies the colors of the dress, appears next to her as in a cloud. One woman, the camera tells us, is real, and yet the other, the unreal one, is also present. For Goldchain, unreality is no proof of inexistence. Another photo, another woman: this one a caricature — large, ugly, rummaging for something inside a monstrous purse. The width of her blue lamé dress is stretched over her elephantine belly: she is ponderously real. But next to her, sitting meekly by her side, is another, slimmer, darker woman. Her reality is also obvious — but there is something phantomlike about her presence. Suddenly, next to this weaker image, the fat woman paradoxically becomes less flesh and blood, as if her size protested too much. We become aware that her presence is terrifying because, to repeat Chesterton's joke, she is so big that if she were a fraction bigger she would be impossible.

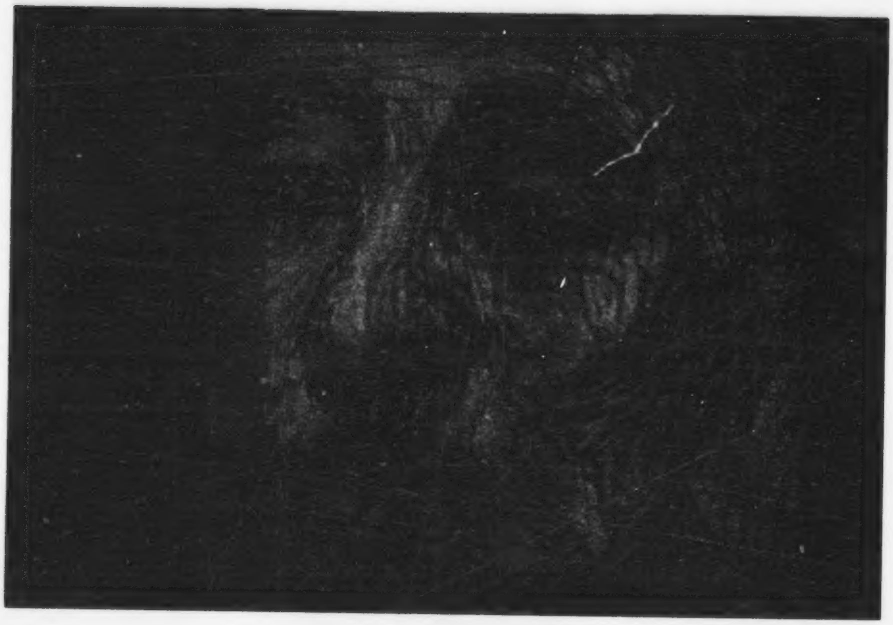
This discontinuation of reality is apparent in most of Goldchain's photos. Sometimes a landscape is diminished by its simultaneous reproduction image on a TV screen; another is questioned by a mural, by a miniature model, by the presence of a lilliputian wedding couple in an enormous courtyard. Time after time Goldchain's images tell us that this reality you see is questionable; there is no such place, or there are several.

Among the many ways in which we see, in which we contrive to form a coherent image that will help us find our bearings, capturing an instant on photosensitive paper is the one we believe to be most trustworthy. Choosing a frame through a lens to divide and alienate reality, we imagine that we are in fact seizing a moment; instead, we are redefining it. Picture postcards of a place stand, for the tourist, as reality itself, and we forget they are merely someone else's preconception. Goldchain insists the documentary reputation of photography is misleading. Using this assumption against itself, Goldchain relentlessly maps out a country created, in the fullest sense, from memory, protean and fleeting, and open to endless perceptions.

Alberto Manguel

FOCUS

ON *JANICE GURNEY*



1001 Details from "Genre" 1988
Oil paint on Will Gorlitz painting *Genre*
24 x 35 in.

Janice Gurney has a signature passion for deconstructing and reconstructing the rhetoric that defines methods of visual representation. She does this by disassembling historical and contemporary imagery and then improving on it. Gurney's work has been much maligned for its unabashed appropriation of film imagery (a still from a Godard film, for instance, in her last show at the Embassy Cultural House in London, Ontario), as well as her painterly examinations in the past of the work of such Toronto artists as David Clarkson, Elizabeth MacKenzie, Joanne Tod and Will Gorlitz.

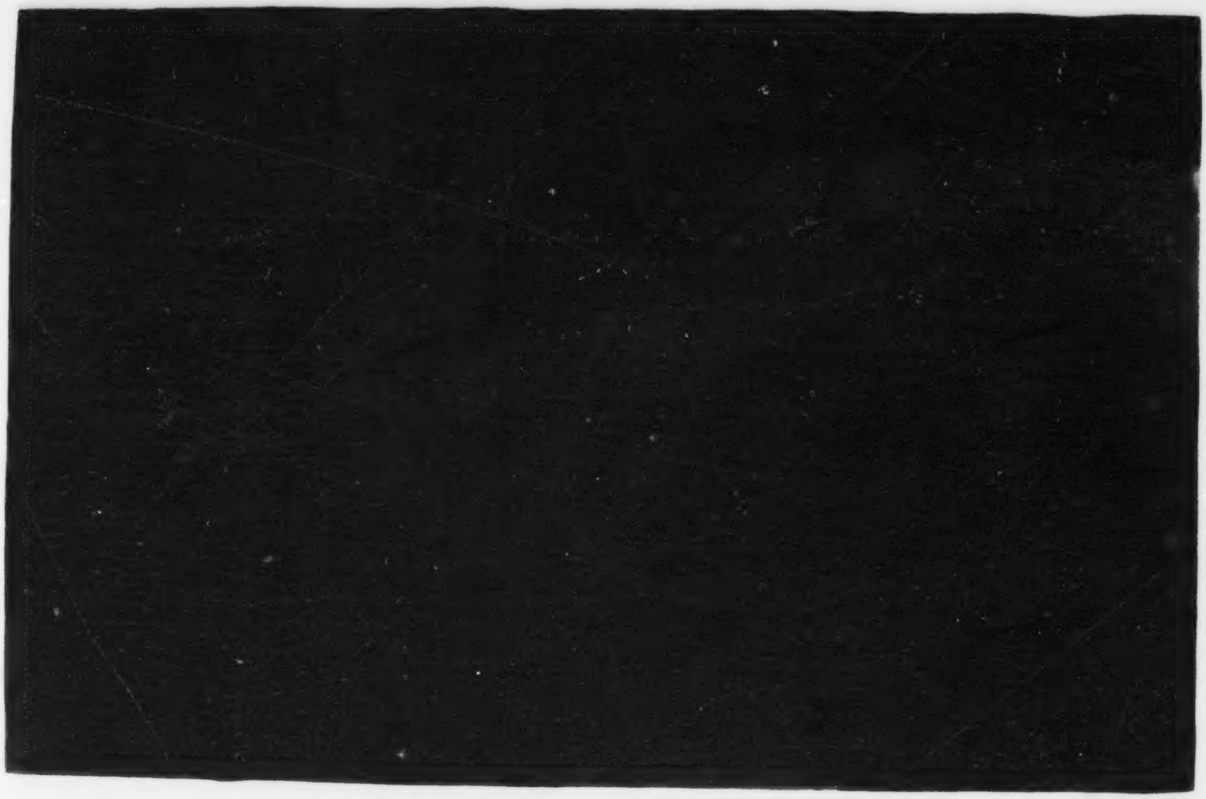
Case in point is Gurney's *1001 Details from "Genre"* (1988), which features 1,001 brush strokes applied over a detail of a Gorlitz painting. Here, Gorlitz's individual brushstrokes are identified and ultimately deified. Similarly, in *Interview* (1989), an image by Shirley Wiitasalo and one by Oliver Girling have been first of all forged and signed by a commercial artist hired by Gurney and then split down the centre and placed in a perverse, Janus-type arrangement in which one half of each painting adjoins the other.

Other examples of her more recent work contain fewer contemporary references and more formal aspects. *Academy of Secrets* (1989) is a cryptic triptych that plays on a photo of Italian artist Giorgio Morandi's studio. An image of his collection of paintbrushes is bookended by representations of stacked newspapers altered with white strokes on Plexiglas to allude to the image of the brushes. *Ashes* (1987) consists of two images of an embrace from the Alain Resnais film *Hiroshima Mon amour* that also embrace an enlarged detail of water on skin.

Gurney has adapted the rhetoric that speaks from the walls of Toronto art galleries. In so doing, she has created pristine aesthetic postures that have their own sense of grace. The imagery of Gurney's peers could not have been dissected by a more loving surgeon's hands. Her examinations exist as parallel visual fictions that complement rather than criticize existing art forms.

Gurney has a show at New York's 49th Parallel in November and at the Koffler Gallery in Toronto in December.
Donna Lypchuk

FOCUS ON *JOHN HARTMAN*



The Flood **1987**
Color drypoint engraving
7 x 10 in.

In 1976 John Hartman's life was stamped by a powerful experience. The artist moved from southern Ontario to the remote settlement of Collins. It was part of a conscious journey with his wife away from a shared disenchantment with their own culture. In that journey, Collins was the latest step. They might as well have stepped out of their skins.

Collins is an Indian community 320 kilometres north of Thunder Bay where Hartman's wife, Patricia, had been hired to teach school. Its population in 1976 was 125. The artist found himself thrust into the midst of a powerful native culture anchored in the natural world. This culture, he felt, existed magically, apart from, on the edge of his own; but alas, a little bruised by the proximity.

In 1981 the couple returned to the south and settled in the village of Lafontaine near the Georgian Bay town of Penetanguishene. At first Hartman continued the work in landscape that had occupied him in the north. But something strange began to happen. Figures started to enter the pictures. They were, it appeared to the artist, simply walking in unbidden.

"I did 26 small ink studies, almost without a pause," Hartman would write later, "as if these subjects had been waiting to be drawn."

At first the figures stole almost silently into the frame. A few of Hartman's fine, limpid, drypoint etchings from this period reveal the tiny visitors plunging through the air or dreaming on the ground. But they grew with astonishing swiftness. Soon they were hijacking whole pictures. Now they have receded, and appear content to occupy Hartman's vast, uplifting landscapes in something like scale.

"Those subjects," says Hartman, "they're the memories of Collins." The pictures they produce are as troubling as they are vivid. In *Luke Visited By Devils* (1989), for example, Hartman recalls a tumultuous time when the entire community was seized by a mass conversion to evangelical Christianity.

"There was a lot of talk of devils." And in *After the Moose Hunt* (1988), the artist narrates the sad failure of a Collins guide to deliver a moose to his American clients. After the dismal consolation of Scotch that Hartman depicts with such gestural conviction, the guide was annihilated by a train as he was walking home along the tracks.

These are thunderous pictures, at once pathetic and thrillingly chromatic. Their skies are ready at any moment to tear open upon a universe of heartbreak or of hope.

Matthew Hart

FOCUS ON *ELEANOR BOND*

VIII. Displaced Farmers Set Up Cappuccino Bars and Fish Farms in Lake of the Woods 1988
Oil on canvas
8 x 12 ft.
Photo: Sheila Spence

Nothing in the quality or scale of Eleanor Bond's early work prepared her audience for the eight large industrial landscapes she began composing in 1985. Taken together, these paintings and brace of drawings constitute one of the most accomplished bodies of work in recent Canadian art. The series, *Working Station*, begins a cross-Canada tour at the Surrey Art Gallery October 12 to November 16.

Bond's imaginary landscapes are imbued with a wry sense of political mischief; the result is a genre that might be labelled social geography. The titles underline her penchant for serious wit: *VI. Developing a Fishing Village as a Honeymoon Resort* (1987); *V. Former Mining Town Becomes a Learning Centre for Industrial Archeologists* (1986); or *VIII. Displaced Farmers Set Up Cappuccino Bars and Fish Farms in Lake of the Woods* (1988). Sprinkled throughout are mobile homes, boats, picnic tables, umbrellas and outdoor terraces — all the emblems of post-industrial leisure. But in place of people we are merely given the things people use.

By transforming her subjects into ghost resorts, Bond turns her spectators into archeologists observing clues to our probable future in an imaginary past.

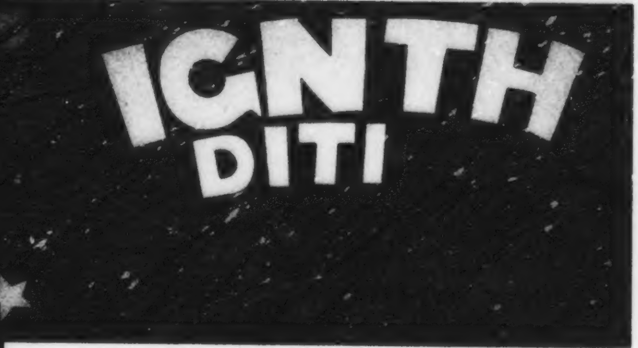
All of Bond's dystopias are seen from above, a perspective that creates a tantalizing vertigo. Her scale is confrontational, with the ultimate effect on the viewer being an experience of simultaneous attraction and repulsion. It's as if she has taken the scraped surfaces of Leon Golub's paintings, the scale and presence of Caspar David Friedrich's landscapes, and an ability to paint water so well that it should drive Daivd Hockney to landlubbing, and combined these elements with the future fiction of Doris Lessing and Ursula Le Guin and an appreciation of government reports predicting high unemployment rates.

These are bewildering, astonishing paintings. They make you wild with aesthetic pleasure and turn to stone any fanciful notions about social progress.

Robert Enright

FOCUS ON KEN LUM

Language Painting 1987
Oil on wood
8 x 5 ft.
Collection: Frank Roos, Stockholm



Language Painting 1987
Acrylic on vinyl
4 x 8 ft.
Collection: Vista Publications, Toronto

The technicolor pop imagery of Ken Lum's art is culled from the seductive icons of advertising: portrait photography, commercial typography and corporate logos. By satirizing the clichés of advertising, Lum reveals the subliminal stereotyping and selective censorship that underlie the cosmetic polish of the media.

Lum's grandiose photo work *Miss Vancouver* (1987), for example, juxtaposes a studio portrait of a beauty contest winner with a decorative sign announcing her official title. The work is a hilarious display of commercial kitsch that mimics the gaudiness of billboard advertisements. It soon turns into parody, however, when placed in the context of a gallery.

Lum's satirization of popular culture registers with the corny directness of an ad slogan. But the joke is on the consumer; Lum is a comedian with a social conscience. In *Line* (1986) — a hybrid of the low-culture scavenging of pop and the reductive repetitiveness of minimalism — Lum presents an acidic commentary on the ever-increasing commodification of art by placing a row of upended couches across the length of the gallery, thus locating the comfortable privacy of a bourgeois living room within the public domain of the gallery.

Recurrent in Lum's art is the juxtaposition of the social (the gallery, the media, the streets) with the private (home furnishings and portrait sittings). In his ongoing series of portrait photographs, *Portrait Logos*, for instance, he delineates how the social prescriptions of the media shape our personal lives. One of these portraits, *Steve* (1986), shows a young, middle-class Oriental man paired with a presentation of his name as a corporate logo, giving him a form of visual identity usually reserved for banks and businesses. This commodification of Steve's persona reminds us how absorbed we are in the ubiquitous artifice of advertising.

But Lum also suggests the possibility of escaping such a materialistic fate by maintaining his own perspective within the accepted social customs of the media. Portraying an ordinary, unglamorized man of Oriental origin, Lum renders visible a minority that remains largely invisible within the race- and class-conscious paradigms of advertising.

Breaking down culturally imposed limitations has been one of Lum's pivotal concerns. In his series *Language Paintings* (1987), he visualized an imaginary, abstract language using the hard-edged, graphic forms of commercial typography. Nonsensical words such as "zerep," "CHMX RLVZ" and "NENO" read like dadaist sound poems but resemble storefront signage or subway billboards, graphically illustrating how the commercial use of language distorts the possibilities of its meanings.

Lum strives for an artistic liberation from the economic structures that inhibit our emotional and intellectual freedom. His work aggressively reaches out into the raucous mainstream of daily life, optimistically proposing the possibility of social change through the subversion of humor.

Earl Miller

FOCUS

ON *LOIS STEEN*

Ancient Scarab 1988
Acrylic on d'Arches paper
22 x 30 in.

There are few Canadian artists who have any interest in or desire to situate their work within the historical context of Canadian art. Most prefer to look ahead. They distain, and therefore ignore, what has gone before them. But a few, such as Toronto painter Lois Steen, have co-authored books on such artists as Carl Schaefer, taught art history and been tutored by that generation of painters who bridged the gap between the heroic school of Canadian landscape painting, as seen in the canvases of the Group of Seven, and the abstract-expressionist school of the Painters Eleven.

Born in London, Ontario, Steen studied art, like her contemporaries Jack Chambers and Greg Curnoe, at the H.B. Beal Technical and Commercial High School. Further instruction followed at the Banff School of Fine Arts and at the Ontario College of Art — she worked under Painters Eleven artist Jock Macdonald — then continued in Italy where she fell, like so many young students of art, under the spell of the Renaissance painters.

When Steen returned to Toronto in 1959 from her 15-month sojourn in Europe, she encountered an avant-garde consumed by non-representational art. Joining the vogue, she combined elements from the Italian landscape, drawing upon the color harmonies she had seen in the work of Piero della Francesca and upon the spirituality of her mentor Jock Macdonald, to produce drawings and canvases that were "strong and painterly," according to reviews at the time.

Since then Steen has continued to paint wonderfully lyrical abstractions. "Some artists like to show the brutal side of life. And some want to work with a particular subject matter. And I guess really where I'm coming in is to make color my theme."

In such works as *Ancient Scarab* (1988) Steen achieves her prismatic color effect by juxtaposing red, blue, black and mauve, infusing her work with movement, energy and a life force that was earlier characteristic of Macdonald's "modalities." Whether we like it or not, continuity is part of the making of art as much as change. And Steen is not afraid to show it.

Maria Tippett

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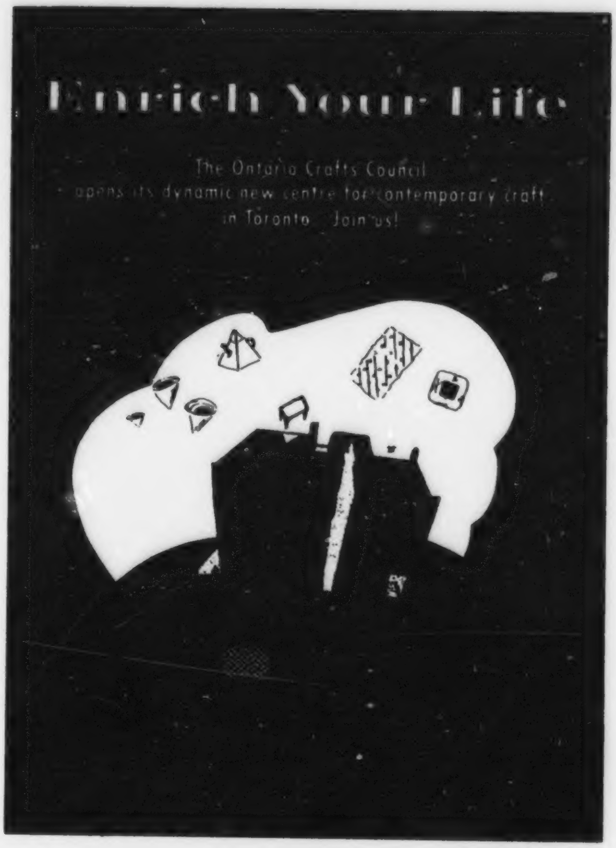
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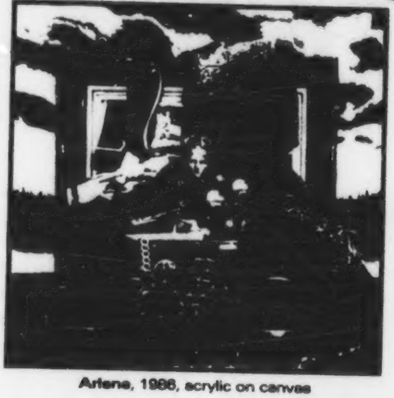

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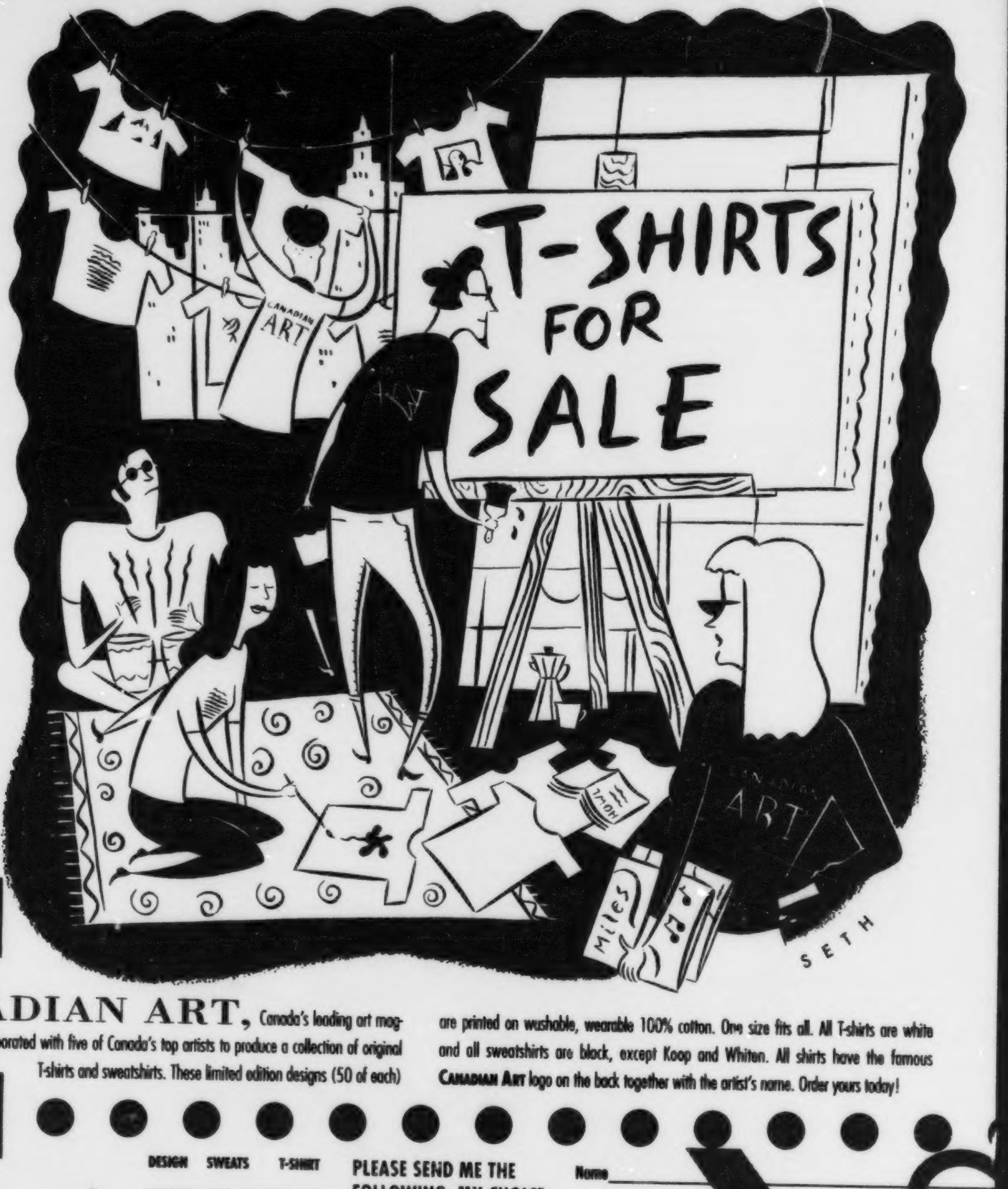

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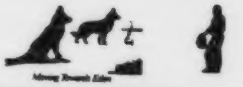

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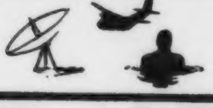

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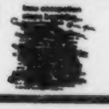

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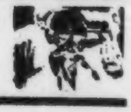

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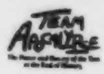

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ADDENDUM
The name of Greg Murdock's Vancouver dealer was inadvertently omitted from the Summer Index: Equinox Gallery, 2321 Granville St, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3G3, (604) 736-2405

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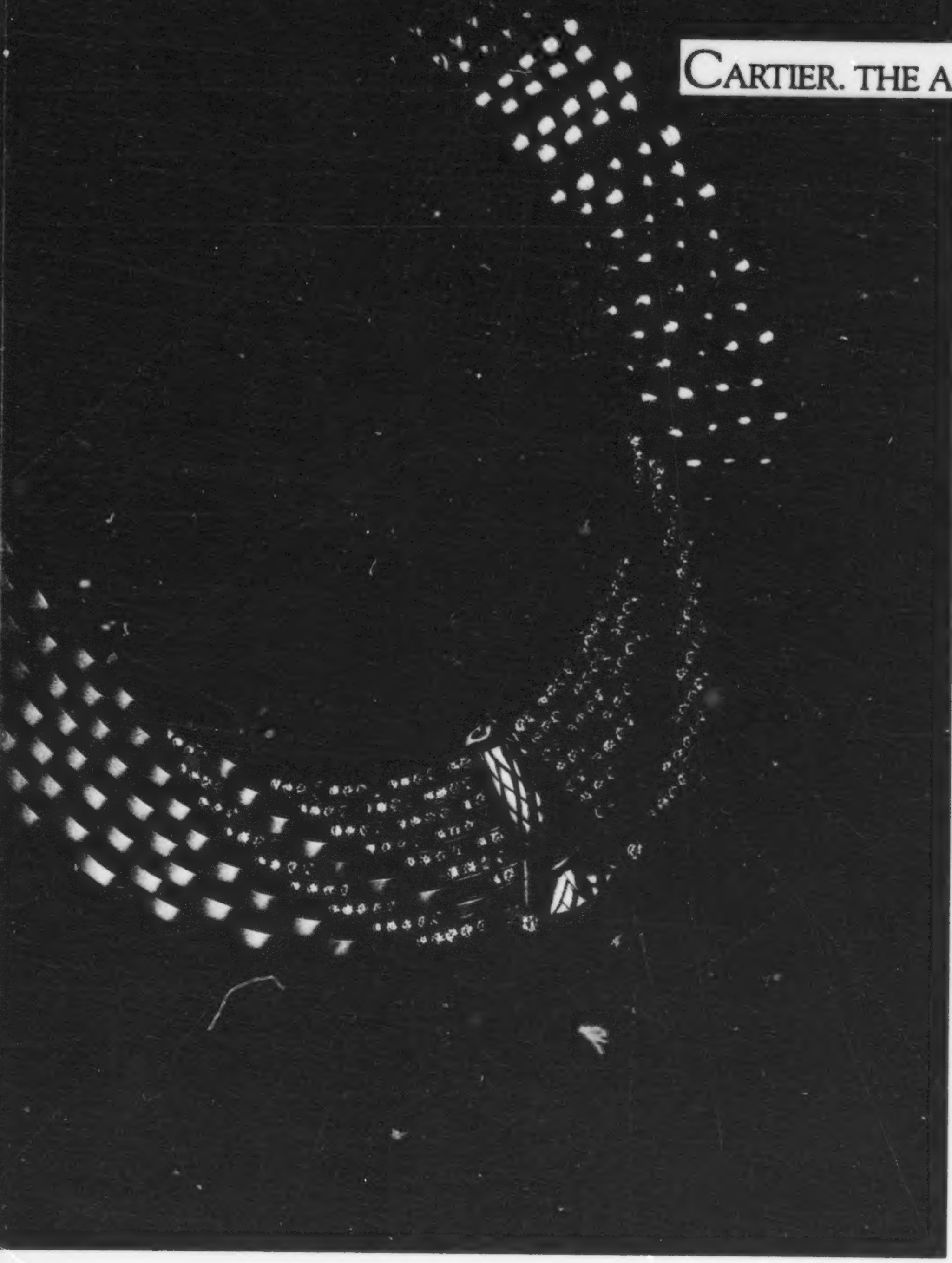

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NUMBER

4

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CANADIAN ART

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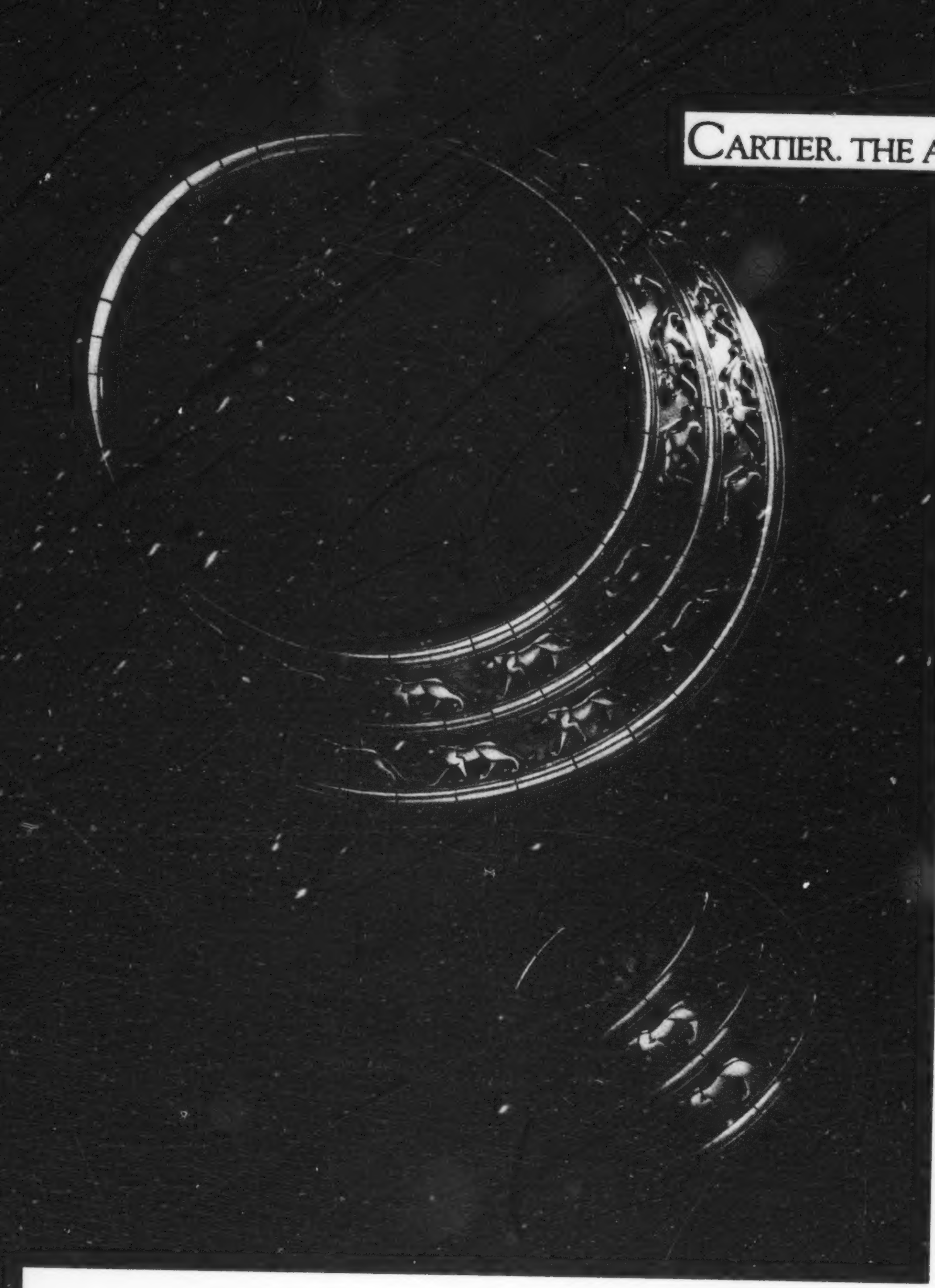

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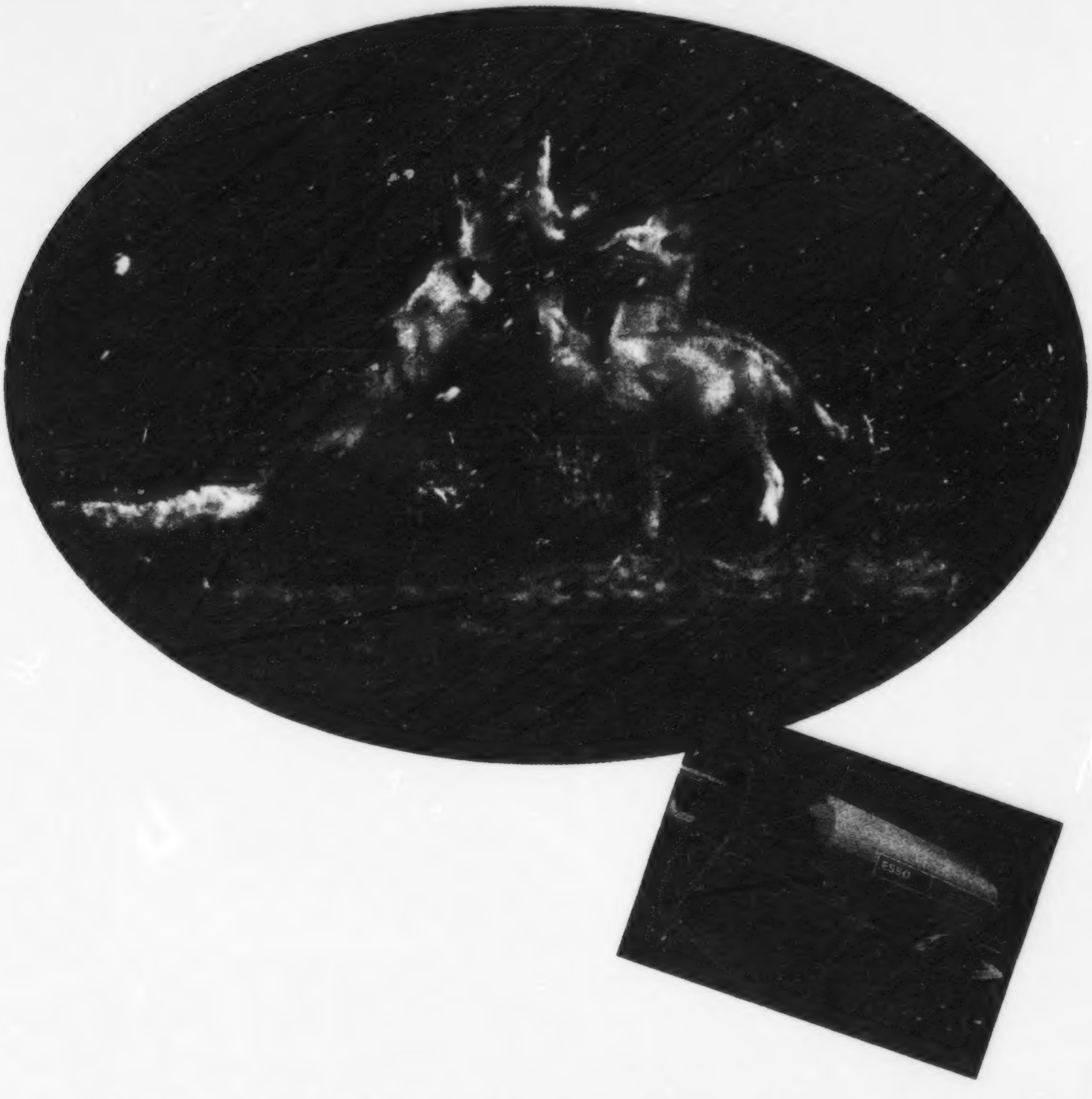

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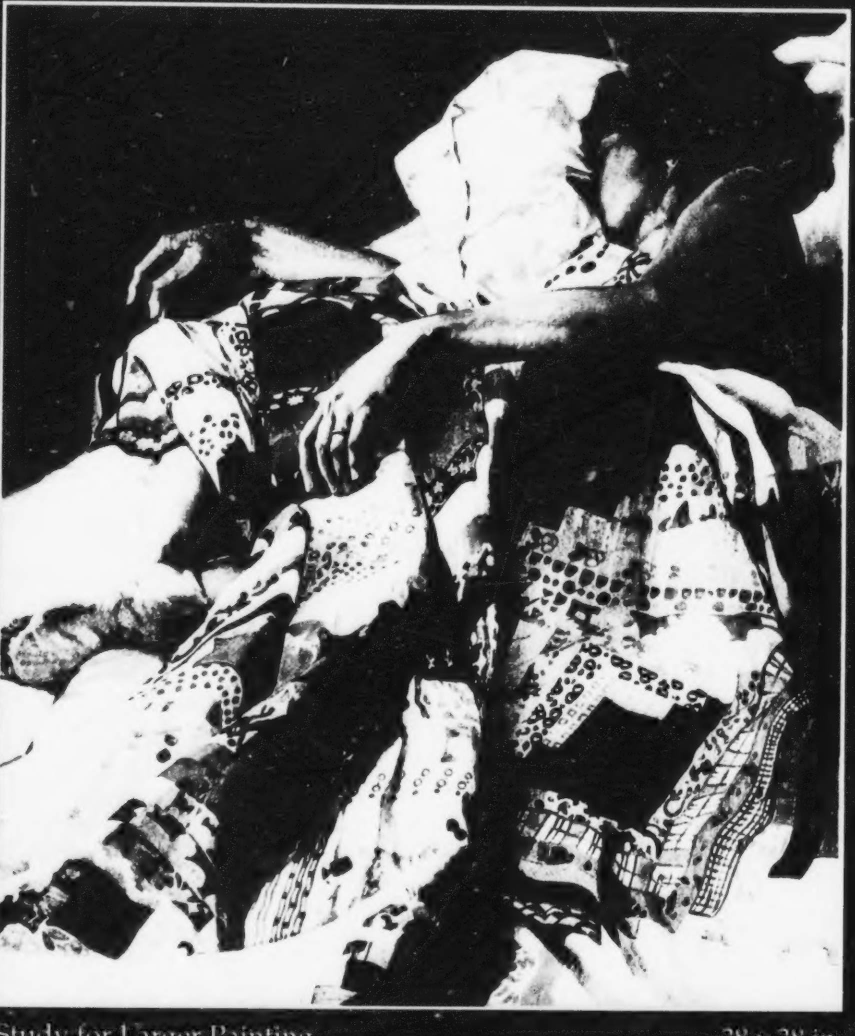

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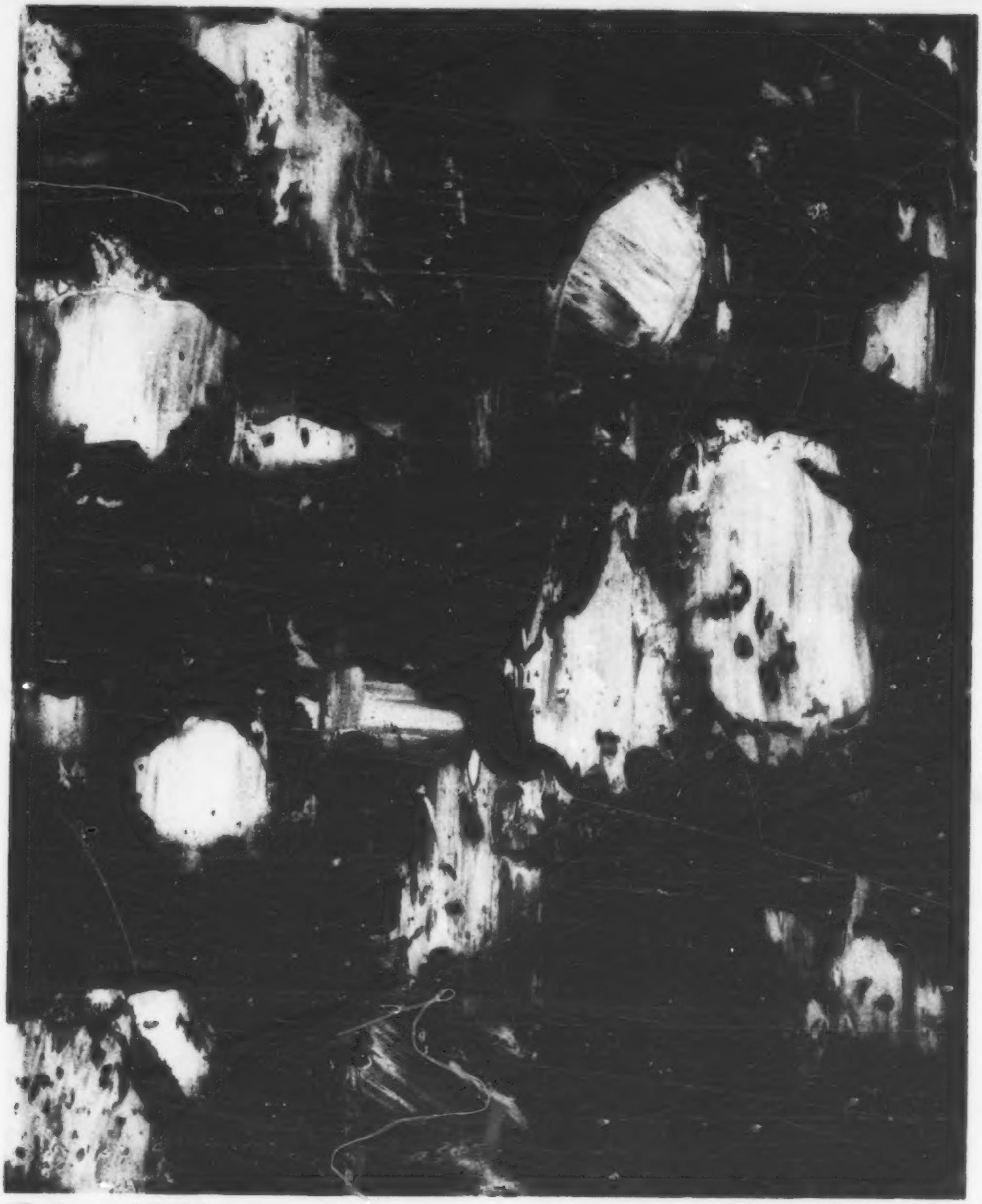

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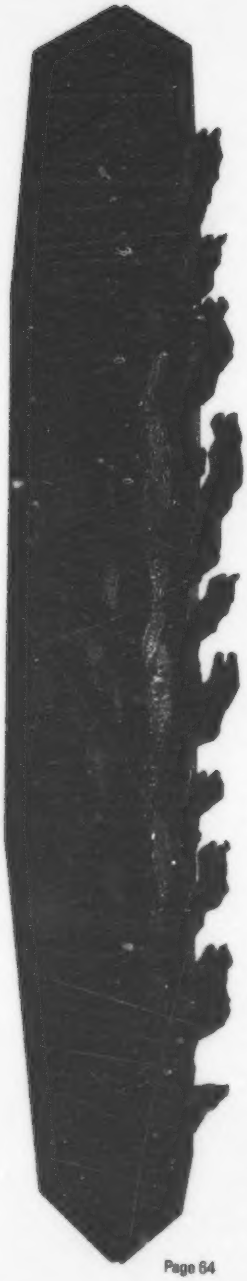

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CANADIAN
ART

Volume 6, Number 4
Winter/December 1989

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Cover: Michael Snow
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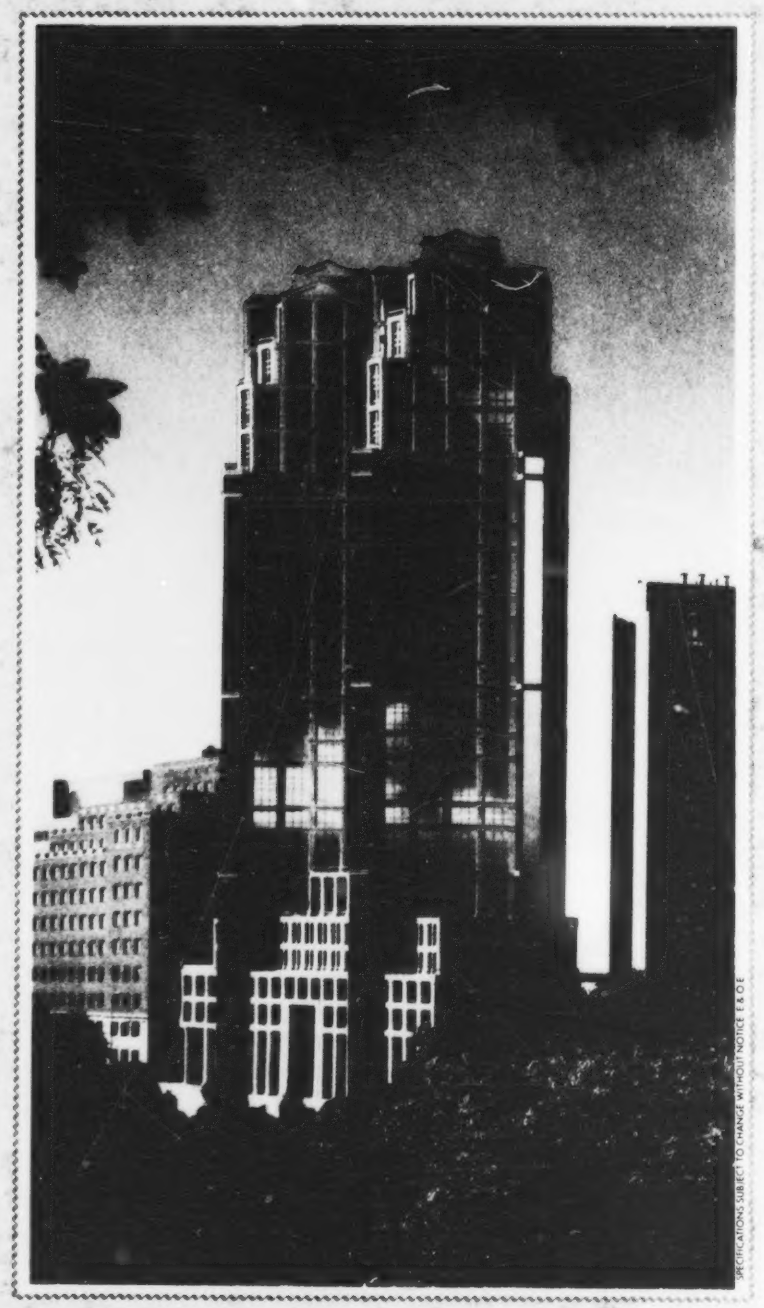

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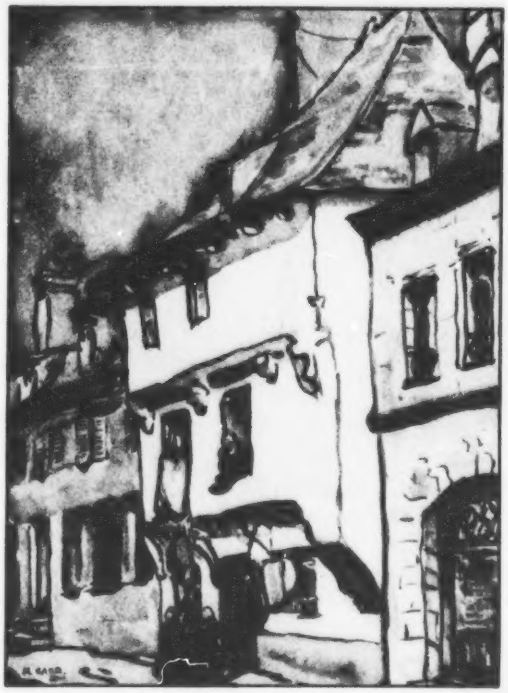

M. EMILY CARR, *"European Street Scene"*, watercolour, signed and dated 1911, 15"x 10¾". Sold on November 7th, 1989 for $66,000.

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EDITORIAL

This issue is special in a number of ways. First, as the cover indicates, the contents are all in black and white. Why? Well, partly because it's winter, and in Canada, black and white (in terms of the landscape) dominate our vision for at least half the year. Geography, as the late Canadian painter Barker Fairley said, is the great Canadian fact. And during the winter months, snow abstracts and accentuates that fact, bringing with it the bare, black branches of the trees that generate a natural calligraphy against the snow-white ground.

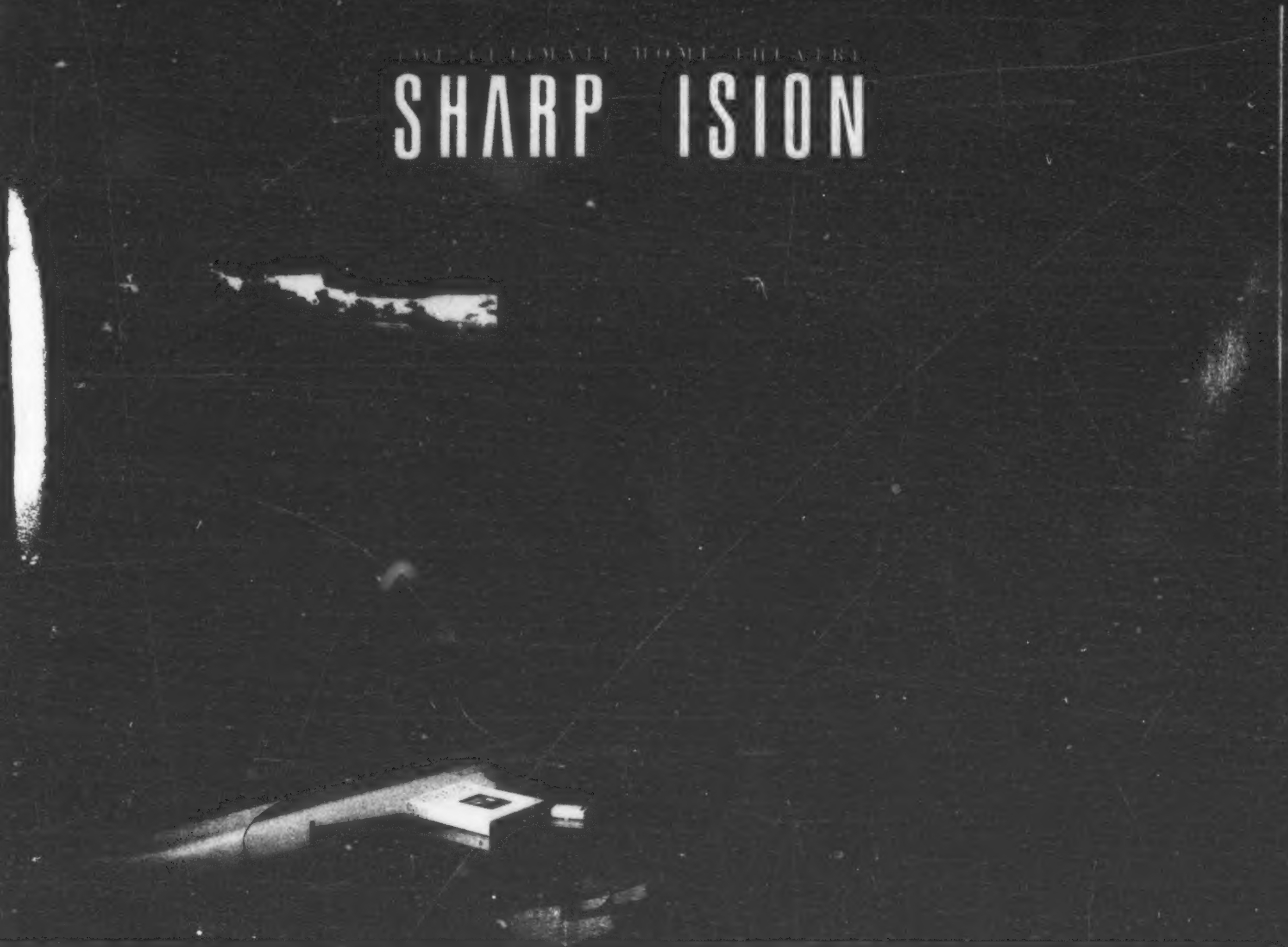
Partly, too, we decided to design this edition of the magazine in black and white as a recognition of photography's 150th anniversary. Although the use of photography in art-making has, of course, far outstripped the imaginings of its pioneers — indeed, it has become central to contemporary art practice — there remains something innately appealing in the basic black-and-whiteness of the archetypal photographic image. Perhaps, within a monochromatic world, we're allowed to reevaluate what's around us with a cooler eye, no longer seduced by the blandishments of color.

But in the end, our primary reason for such an issue lay in the sheer challenge of pulling it off. Magazine readers are accustomed to great swatches of color as they turn the pages. Black-and-white editorial content — with the honorable exception of art magazines such as *C* and *Parachute* — is often looked at askance, perceived as old-fashioned or even dull. And our point is that not only is black and white not dull, it is part of the cutting edge of art, architecture and design.

The contents of this issue reflect that premise. Poet, naturalist and critic Christopher Dewdney, for example, has written his first feature for this magazine on Judith Schwarz (page 64), whose graphic steel, concrete and wood installations retain their vigor and severity within a black-and-white presentation. Margaret Priest's richly textured, architectural drawings seemed ideal for this issue, as did the notion, from contributing editor Adele Freedman, that furniture fabricated from metal was an increasingly important aspect of current design. Finally, we have included a *Canadian Art* portfolio of black-and-white photographs by Andrew Danson, who collaborated with a number of Canadian artists to make a unique set of self-portraits.

The resulting issue is, we feel, a forceful unity of language and image, welded together by the satisfying bonding of black and white working together as the building blocks of communication. With all the crispness of winter but without, we hope, its chill.

JOCELYN LAURENCE
EDITOR



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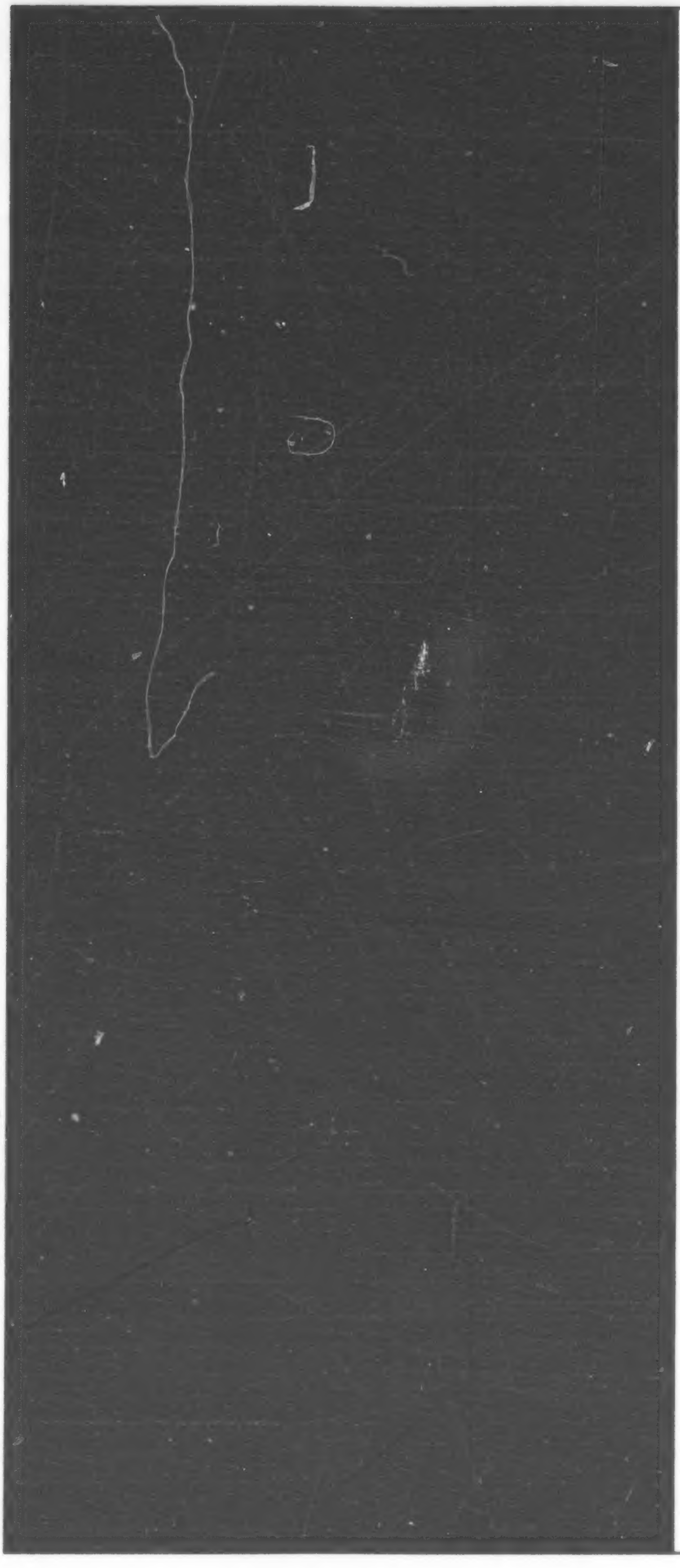

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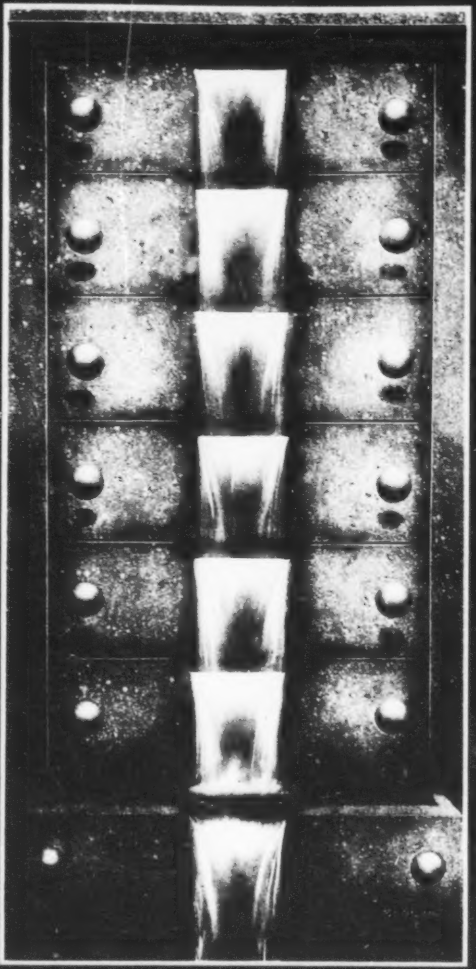

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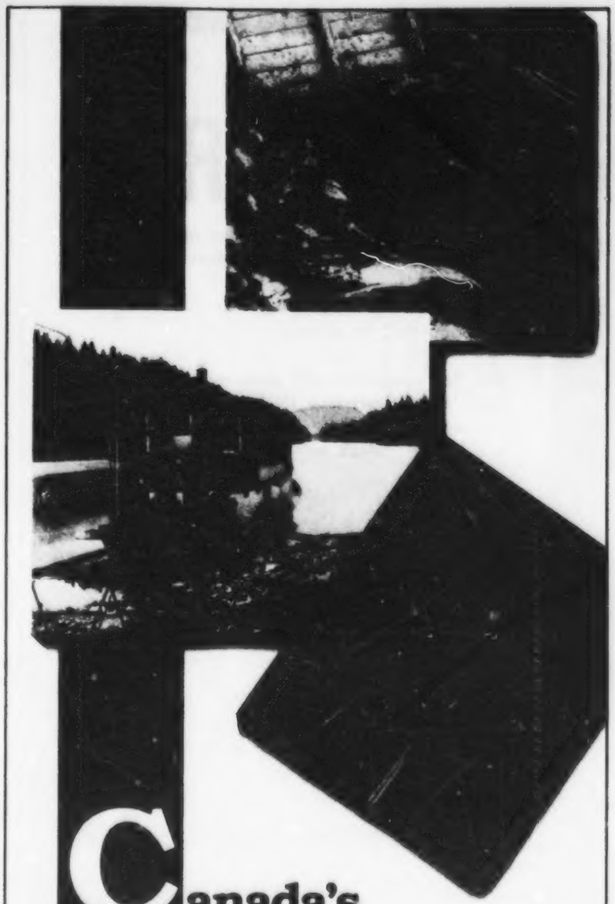

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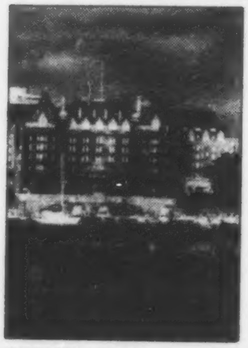

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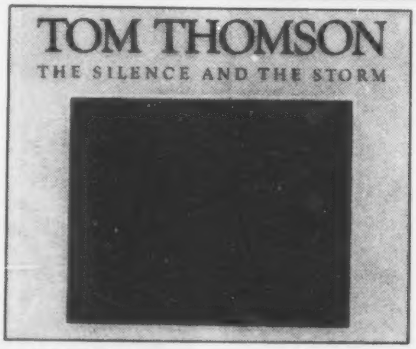

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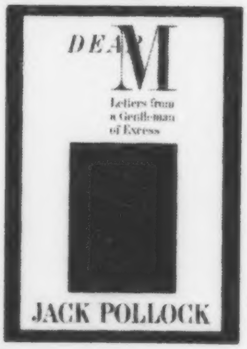

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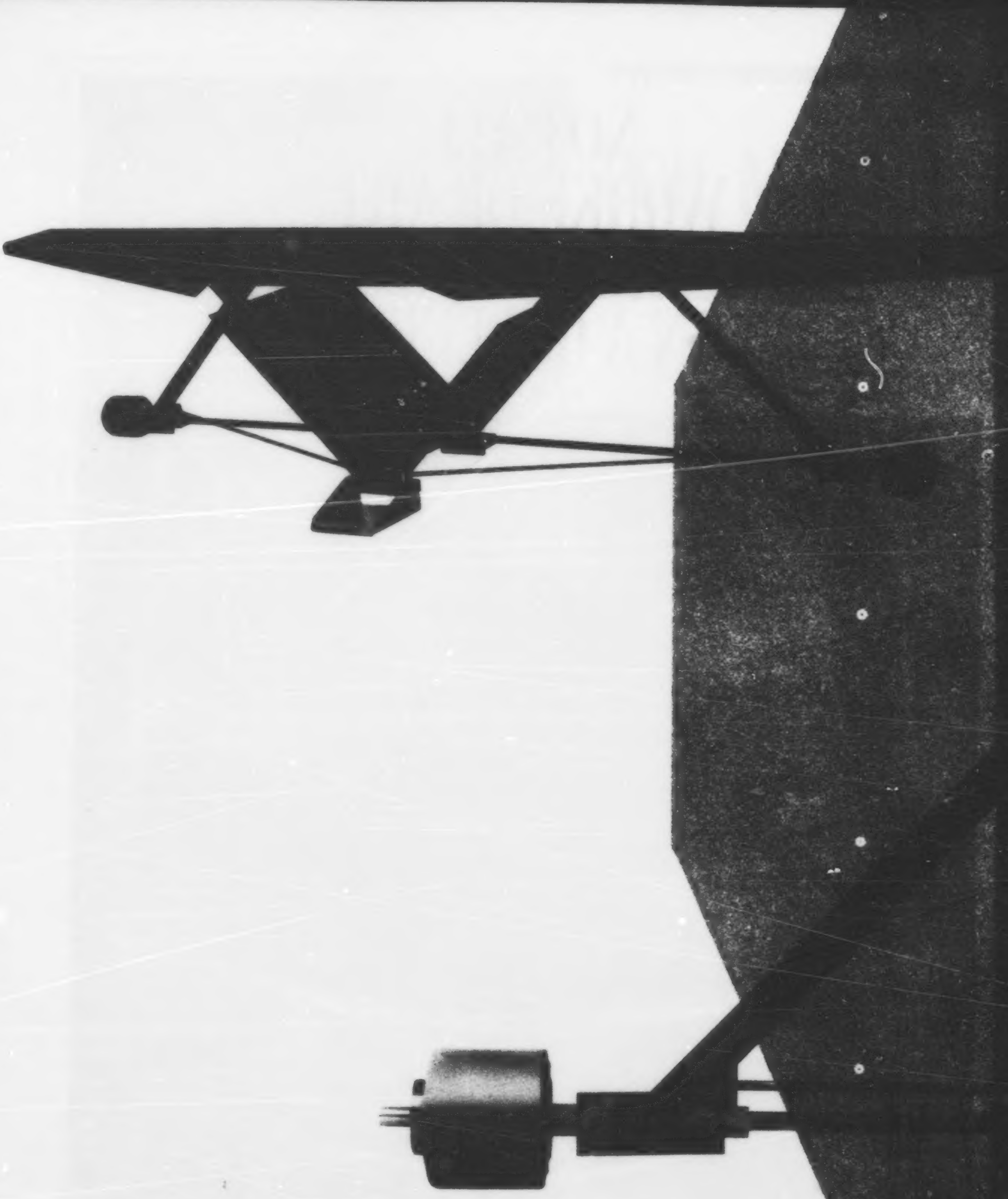

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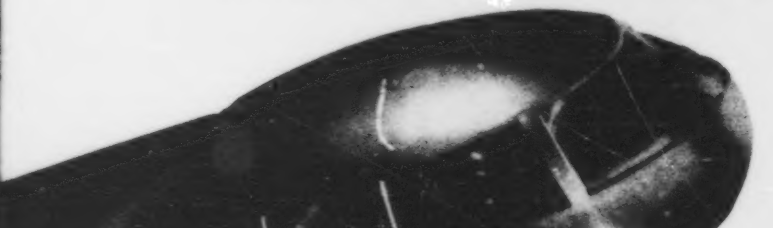
BY GARY MICHAEL DAULT

The Object

NOSTALGIA FOR THE FUTURE: TOMORROW IS 50 YEARS OLD



Stainless steel car model
Futurama exhibit
1939 New York World's Fair

Nineteen-eighty-nine is the 50th anniversary of the 1939 New York World's Fair, the modernist Expo mounted a half-century ago on Flushing Meadow as a preview of The World of Tomorrow. Conceived as a trade fair with an ideological subtext, the big fair, the most majestically contrived exposition since the Crystal Palace housed the first World's Fair in 1853, was a monument to Ralph Waldo Emerson's adage "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." Grover Whalen, the Fair's indefatigable president, put it succinctly if a trifle strangely when he described the aim of the Fair as an event "to place en route the world"s resources in a gigantic crusade against man's chief foes: inertia, lassitude and chance."

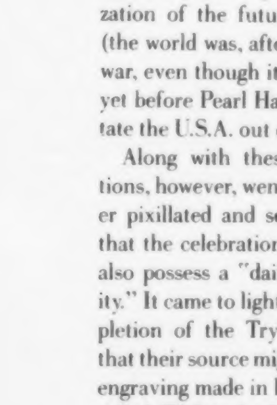
Not to put too fine a point on it, the Fair's moral message was only a slight vulgarization of that quintessentially North American melding of piety and capitalist progress we have come to think of as the Protestant work ethic. Things, which come to anyone who works hard, are their own reward and contain within their shining palpability a gleam akin to the radiance that used to emanate from the locus of virtue. Novelist and futurologist H.G. Wells, writing in *The New York Times*, advised that "the visitor who wants to get the most out of this World's Fair will do best to regard it not as a show of things, but let his imagination off the leash of discretion for a bit....Then he may really get a glimpse of the realities of tomorrow that lurk in this jungle of exhibits. It will cease to look like a collection of things for sale and reveal its real nature as a gathering of live objects, each of which is going to do something to him, possibly something quite startling, before he is very much older."

The "live objects" that did the most for the majority of Fair visitors, and those of us who know the Fair as an arrangement of architectural icons, were of course the exhibition's centrepiece, the "futuristic temple" made up of an enormous obelisk and globe known as the Trylon and the Perisphere. Designed by New York architect Wallace K. Harrison (referred to by Rem Koolhaas in his book *Delirious New York* as "Manhattan's last genius of the *possible*"), the Trylon (a triangular pylon) was a 610-foot gypsum-clad anti-skyscraper, a hollow breath of architectural bravado. The Perisphere, a gypsum-clad architectural soap bubble, was 180 feet in diameter and 18 stories high — twice the size, as the Fair's guidebook so proudly pointed out, of Radio City Music Hall. Together, the two fantasy structures epitomized the Fair and its modern ambitions, the gestalt of the needle and sphere working so effectively as a presence that they aroused in their audiences the sort of affection you would expect to be generated from beings, not objects. The young autobiographical hero of E.L. Doctorow's novel *World's Fair* is utterly stricken with the sublimity of the two structures when he gets off the elevated railway and enters the Fair for the first time: "They were enormous. They were white in the sun, white spire, white globe, they went together, they belonged together as some sort of partnership in my head. I didn't know what they stood for, it was all very vague in my mind....I thought of them as friends of mine."

Which was the idea. Pedagogic friends, writ architecturally. Although it is usually assumed that Harrison's sources for the Trylon and Perisphere lay in the satisfyingly archetypal reductiveness of Bauhaus structures and the mechanical openness of Russian Constructivism, it seems clear enough now that Harrison and his collaborator, J. André Foulihoux, were after something more literary, more parablelike in its program, than any species of purist architecture could supply. "The edifice," wrote Harrison, "should be as modern as possible, and should attempt to express the civilization of the future with confidence" (the world was, after all, on the brink of war, even though it would be some time yet before Pearl Harbour would precipitate the U.S.A. out of its isolationism).

Along with these modernist aspirations, however, went the architects' rather pixillated and sentimentalizing rider that the celebrational structures should also possess a "dainty, ephemeral quality." It came to light, soon after the completion of the Trylon and Perisphere, that their source might well have been an engraving made in 1875 by an A. I. Rice, called *Within the Gates*, a visionary passage of graphic giganticism reminiscent of the paintings of John Martin (1789-1854) and depicting a pastoral heaven of tree-fringed lagoons dominated by an unbelievably huge, misty dome (not unlike Toronto's SkyDome in its crushingly inappropriate scale) and a vaulting space-needle so high it loses itself in the cirrus clouds that ripple the divine firmament.

Trylon and Perisphere souvenir lamp from the 1939 New York World's Fair



Trylon and Perisphere souvenir pin from the 1939 New York World's Fair

Whatever their source, however, the Fair's trademark structures immediately became a part of the concrete language of self-congratulation, emblems of well-being, turning up in a thousand silly but endearing souvenir manifestations: "the egg and tack," "the pin and ball," "the big apple" (so called, apparently, by the ironworkers who constructed the Perisphere) were suddenly purchasable in handy take-home form as bookends, banks, lamps, paperweights, ashtrays and even as "sewing sets with Perisphere pincushions" (see *Trylon and Perisphere* by Barbara Cohen, Steven Heller and Seymour Chwast, Abrams Books, 1989, for a full-color, panoramic display of these charming and now highly collectable artifacts). It is amusing to note, by the way, that nowhere among the playful nicknamings of Trylon and Perisphere are there to be found any allusions to the obvious phallus and womb symbolism upon which the structures seem to be centrally predicated — probably because there were so few translations of the works of Freud available until the authoritative A.A. Brill editions, which began appearing in North America in 1938, only a year before Freud's death.

The majority of the pavilions of the Fair were unabashedly devoted to selling — even if that included selling the desired image of the exhibiting company or country. National Cash Register, for example, built a pavilion designed by Walter Dorwin Teague to look like a gargantuan pre-Oldenburgian cash register, which, instead of ringing up cash totals, recorded the Fair's daily attendance — thereby establishing a subtle equivalence between people and numbers that nobody appeared to find offensive. General Motors mounted the spectacular Futurama, a vast complex of sleek modern buildings designed by Norman Bel Geddes and Albert Kahn. Eight million dollars worth of seductive promotion of the increasing centrality of the automobile within America's dream of the future, Futurama whisked its seated patrons along moving sidewalks that carried them on a 16-minute tour over 35,738 square feet of miniature future-world, a complete model city with 50,000 teardrop-shaped cars and trucks speeding along multi-laned superhighways — the wonderful world of 1960! Utopia, General Motors maintained, had to happen. Otherwise what of the fate of the family car?

Trylon and Perisphere had nothing to sell, however, but their own compressed representation of the American Truth. Trylon was essentially empty, an elaborate portal funneling visitors onto the world's two largest escalators by which they ascended into the pasteboard Valhalla of the Perisphere and their viewing of the spectacle called "Democracity, the Metropolis of the Machine Age." Democracity, like GM's Futurama city, was a model — "a city of light and air and green space as it would appear from 7,000 feet." Spectators were distributed around slowly revolving mezzanines and looked down into the hub of a rational urbanism, a parklike city with huge thoroughfares cutting through metropolitan meadows to converge finally at a 100-storey skyscraper at the centre — Democracity's bureaucratic brain and a lone representative of Corbusier's Radiant City towers, a utopian/dystopian holdover of the "future shining city," the White City of the generalized mythopoeic dream of urban perfectibility. After six minutes of light and music and majestic voice-overs rhapsodic with the poetics of progress, visitors left by way of a long curving ramp called the Helicline, from which was available a meditative overview of the entire Fair. Such a long winding view, it was hoped by the designers of Democracity, would complete the transformation of the Fair's visitors into eager participants in a modernist/consumerist future made poignant in hindsight by the war clouds gathering beyond the horizon.

By Susan Crean

The Female Gaze

CHANGING DIRECTIONS: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON NATIVE WOMEN'S ART

Frieda Diesing
Portrait Mask 1988
Alderwood, paint
12 in. high
Photo: Lawrence Cook

Rush hour traffic streams along Toronto's Kingston Road in the late afternoon, late summer heat. Shirley Bear, resplendent in a ribbon-work skirt and tuxedo jacket with red satin lapels, sits up front watching Scarborough slide by. Her daughter, Ramona, 12, stretches out beside me on the van seat, sleeping gratefully. It's been three long days waiting and watching and following her mother about the city, from one interview to another, from Harbourfront up to the *Morningside* studios and back down again. But tonight is the big event, and tomorrow there will finally be time for *Batman*.

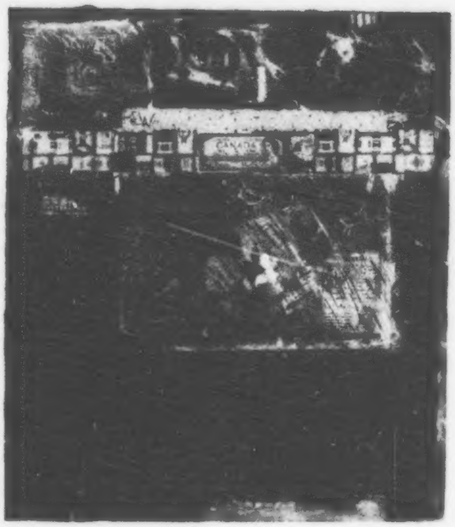
We reach the Gabriel Dumont complex and locate Gladys Kidd's apartment. Shirley knocks, and calls in through the window, but there's no answer. "She's probably gone off to play bingo," a neighbor offers. Gladys Kidd is an Ojibway elder, a second midewin, much revered and in demand. She's been asked to do an opening ceremony for the celebration called *Tahranto: A Gathering of Women's Words and Images* — using the Missisaugi word for the ancient place where Toronto now stands. The celebration, also a performance, is part of an exhibition of contemporary Native Indian art, which The Writers in Prison Committee of Canadian P.E.N. and the Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts have arranged to bring to the York Quay Gallery at Harbourfront for the month of September, to coincide with the 54th P.E.N. World Congress, which will address the theme "The Writer: Freedom and Power." Ten women artists, as well as New Brunswick printmaker Shirley Bear, who curated the show, are here to present their work.

"Shall we try to find her?" I ask Shirley, who shrugs. "Well, if I know Gladys, she'll be all settled in by now with her bingo cards paid for, and if we show up this late to take her off to an art exhibit she'll just tell us to think again." What a disappointment, but then, I think, we are later than promised. "Still," smiles Shirley, "maybe we'll get back to Harbourfront and find Gladys there waiting."

It's 7 o'clock when we finally arrive and the party is in full bloom. Three hundred or so people mill about, talking and enthusing about the work, queuing up to chat with the artists. And sure enough, there on the terrace, on a bench under a tree, sits Gladys Kidd.

More people flow in and the evening assumes its own life, spreading out into a gentle rhythm. As the sun slips to the horizon beyond the islands, the seats in the Water's Edge Cafe fill and the atmosphere builds with expectance. Shirley leads the elder to her place at the centre; the crowd is invited to form a circle around the room; sage is burned in a shell and carried slowly around the circle. Thick, cleansing smoke fanned with eagle feathers wafts through the room; the silence is broken only by Gladys Kidd's prayers.

She asks people to appreciate the talent brought together for the occasion, to see and hear and learn. To rejoice that "one has been freed from prison" — for, rather miraculously, P.E.N. has just received confirmation from London that Martha Kumsa, an Ethiopian writer who



Jane Ash Poitras
Monetary Blackboard 1989
Paper, collage, mixed media
36 x 41 ½ in.

has been languishing in prison without charge or trial since 1980, has finally been released. Not your average art opening, think I. Not, in fact, like any exhibition ever presented in Toronto — or, I am told, anywhere else in Canada — before.

The exhibition, entitled *Changers: A Spiritual Renaissance*, is wonderfully diverse, spanning traditions, cultures, generations, geographies as well as genres: painting, drawing, etching, photography, collage, wood carving, installation, sculpture, film, and performance. Rebecca Belmore's performance piece, *Ihkwewak Kaayamihwat II: Means Women Who are Speaking*, holds the audience in thrall for 45 minutes and, in a way, articulates the theme of the whole show. Belmore begins with a journey: a young Indian running desperately through the terrace-and-wading-pool environs of the Water's Edge Cafe with an oil painting strapped to her back by means of a girdle that pinions her arms to her sides. As she stumbles about under the weight of European culture (the icon bobbing absurdly about in its gilt frame and lighted viewing lamp), she is pursued by the strains of the late '50s pop song *Running Bear*. Belmore then reappears inside on stage without the straitjacket, where she "performs" a collection of narratives. Using the taped voices and slide images of Native women talking about their lives and recovering their culture, she transforms herself into a subtext, accompanying the stories with the methodical motion and timeless, soothing water sounds of laundry being washed and wrung out.

Rebecca Baird's heroic installations are also about re/discovery. Reaching for her long-buried aboriginal origins, she gathers motifs from the Cree and Navaho cultures, uniting the symbols of courage (the eagle) and fertility (corn). In *The Lightning Tangled in My Eyes*, shiny, twisting copper wires descend from a 16-foot ceiling in front of a huge, majestic arc of eagle feathers, illuminating a stand of shoulder-high, painted wood corn stalks that wave in the wind. Or so it seems. Like stepping into a new-fashioned *tableau vivant*, the impact is of high-intensity realism, a quality Baird shares with Alanis Obomsawin whose documentary film *No Address* is included in the show. About homeless Native youth in Montreal, *No Address* is a searing account of people living out the cycle of poverty and dispossession in the dead centres of our cities. The film delivers a strong message that is elegaic in Obomsawin's telling.

Then, from another perspective, Shelley Niro's oil painting *Waitress* retells the story: a Native woman serving white customers in a crowded restaurant spills a goblet of wine as she places it on the table, balancing a tray of food in her right hand as she reaches to steady it. Behind, on the dance floor, Brian and Mila Mulroney whirl around to the music, grinning maniacally as they go. The room pulses with movement, but no one looks anyone else in the eye, and the waitress looks down at the table.

Ruth Cuthand and Joane Cardinal-Schubert have both taken up the imagery of ceremonial dress. Cuthand's six-year, 60-part series of Ghost Dance dresses (worn by men and women) is here represented by three larger-than-life paintings on canvas — orange on yellow, turquoise on red, yellow on blue. The latter, *Remember Your Feminine Wiles* shows a yellow dress ripped and frayed (actually as well as figuratively) at the edges of the canvas where the image bleeds, blood-red like a wound. Cardinal-Schubert's six war shirts, *Preservation of the Species*, exquisite paper constructions encased in plastic (as are real artifacts in museums), are hung on wooden crosses and festooned with personal artifacts (her grandmother's sewing needle, baby bundles) and slogans of prejudice past and present: *Then There Were None*, *Remnant I*, *Remember Dunbow*. Creating objects of poignant delicacy, Cardinal-Schubert works on several intellectual and aesthetic tracks at once, as does Jane Ash Poitras. History, herstory, art, fine art, artifact, Native fact. In her *Blackboard Series*, Poitras can be seen rummaging about contemporary city/reserve culture for documents and memories and inflammatory questions: "Economic development for Indians — is that why the rain forest is being cut down?" Credit cards, beer cans, Bibles and fading newspaper photos (a young Indian girl dressed in white for her first communion), all assembled with a sharp eye for visual allusion.

Alongside these outspoken voices comes the quiet, subtly intoned speech of two quite different artists, Glenna Matoush and Faye HeavyShield, both of them mistresses of adopted technique. Matoush's etchings and intaglios are marvels of modulated texture, detail and mood. Her technical complexity, however, resolves into genial simplicity. By contrast Faye HeavyShield's sculptures begin and end with startling understatement. Her pieces are drawn with a fine calligrapher's line, wire and wood constructions sit with minimalist intensity on the wall. The three-part series *Trap in Yellow Ochre*, for example, can be seen as a reference to real-life objects, yet function more as sacred objects of contemplation.

Freda Diesing's sculptures mix contemporary and traditional aesthetics in different proportions. A Haida carver of the generation of artists who in the '60s returned to the traditions of their grandmothers' people and revived a forgotten art, Diesing's smooth-skinned alderwood masks are works of mythic power. Her *Self Portrait Mask* is a compelling blend of the personal and the mysterious. The hair, I note, is composed of an emblematic design of her own Eagle Clan. Design suiting sense.

Changers is about changing. Changing consciousness and spiritual direction; undoing aesthetic privilege so it becomes possible to see the world with the wise, old-young eyes of women whose people have always been here, and known why.

The Screen

By John Scott

APPEARANCES TO THE CONTRARY: THE COMMODIFICATION OF DISTORTION

Top: Colm Wilkinson as The Phantom in the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical
Middle: John Scott with Bell's palsy
Below: Lon Chaney as The Phantom of the Opera in the 1925 film version

For what seemed like an interminable period we had been notified by every form of media that He was coming. The publicity machine that generated the success of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*, with its false nostalgia, artifice and romantic tragedy, had built into it a certain set of ideas from which radiated a media blitzkrieg, an interconnected communications campaign in which it was difficult to tell what was being sold. Did the Phantom hire Pepsi? Is Pepsi the drink of the romantically mutilated? But Webber's spectacle essentially rotates around a certain obsession with the body, or rather the surface of the body and its subtext of aestheticization — that is to say, truth is beauty and beauty, truth. In a society in which plastic surgery is a major growth industry, narcissism clearly is the dominant operational mode at the top of the motivational food chain. What could be more horrible or more tragic than facial disfigurement and the ensuing rupture and isolation from society and the self that it engenders?

The story of the Phantom has been retold three times in film and each version has contained within it the central cultural values of its time. Current cinema abounds in facial disfigurement and the marginalized monstrous as a plot device for creating both anti-heroes and villains. It's at the centre of almost all horror films as well as the occasional attempt — like David Lynch's film *The Elephant Man* (1980) — to examine it as a unique human situation.

TV even has a weekly series based on it — *Beauty and the Beast*, in which the star, Vincent, is certainly the most beautiful of beasts. His clothing, hair, speech and bearing place him somewhere between heavy metal and Shakespeare. Vincent, like the Phantom, is a romantic figure of considerable power, but unlike the Phantom, his soul is intact. Why not? He has an awful lot of nice friends and appears to be top dog (or cat) of a rather large and picturesque New York underworld (literally). And the female lead definitely has the hots for him, her eyes going all moist and meaningful whenever she stares at a sewer grating or a manhole.

Beauty and the Beast is currently the sweetest fantasy constructed out of our obsession with the cosmetic self and our horror of being marginalized. Traditionally, the way we make the plight of disfigurement bearable is by investing it with imaginary power and strength, in tandem with a damaged mind gone either evil or psychotic. The disfigured face is the inscriptional history of pain written on the body, whether it is the result of physical trauma or the ensuing isolation from the normal. Again, perhaps the evidence is so tangible, the story so clear, that we must push the narrative a little farther, as if physical pain were so great that it transforms the soul.

In *The Phantom*, the scarring of the Phantom's face then scarred his soul when he committed the fatal flaw of attempting to bridge the unbridgeable gap, to grasp at that supposedly quintessential human experience, romantic love. This obsessional desire to start dating seems to be something all monstrous and marginalized males have in common. The Phantom, Vincent, the Elephant Man, Frankenstein are ultimately lonely guys who add a whole new dimension to the term single.

What made David Cronenberg's film *The Fly* (1986) so interesting was its attempt to illustrate the stresses that the hideous physical transformation of one partner can create on a love already in place. Most of us don't become the love object of a romantic figure who is eventually unmasked as a monster. But most of us at some time have had to endure the sight of the physical decay of those we already love — to see them transformed into monsters. It is a built-in Stephen King novella for which the dominant psychological mode of our times ill equips us. I heard an audience collectively gasp in horror as the female lead in *The Fly* embraced her now mutilated lover. It was a momentary triumph of the human spirit but it was greeted with a spontaneous outburst of disgust.

I have always had a rather rubbery face. It can actually shift to one side if the prevailing winds are strong enough. So several years ago, when I contracted Bell's palsy (a partial paralysis of the face), it managed to twist itself into an astonishingly ugly knot.

To tell the truth, at first there was an adolescent pleasure in being able to contort my face into new and truly disgusting shapes. But as time wore on and the novelty wore off, it lost its appeal. What becomes difficult is watching one's social and emotional relationships decay. All human relationships are essentially contracts, entered into with an unspoken assumption of continuity of essence and form between the parties concerned. Any radical transformation of the physical form of either person constitutes a breaking, or at least a restructuring, of those contracts. The waves of anger that are sometimes directed toward the seriously ill, or the stresses on a relationship when one partner loses a limb, seem bafflingly cruel and callous until you get used to the idea that you've changed and they haven't.

What I also realized was that different forms of stigmatization generate different kinds of negative response. While wearing a black eye patch to compensate for a floppy eyelid, I seemed to inspire fear, coupled with the assumption that I'd got this way doing something violent and probably criminal. Otherwise, my face and slightly slurred speech created the impression I was partially retarded, which people compensated for by speaking to me in a loud voice. But there is a deeper level still at which the physically marginalized profoundly affect us. The facially disfigured are the point men (or women) of the terrorist squad from the Kingdom of Pain and the Land of the Unwell. To be scarred, burned, disfigured, is to bear witness to the fact that the body is corporeal and the flesh mortal. You become the messenger breaking the bad news to people that they are not beautiful, young immortals.

But beyond illness and suffering and even death is another terror that the mutilated inspire — the death of oneself as a social, sexual being. Disfigurement is a glitch in the multifaceted flow of consumer goods, a flow that is based on sustaining and enhancing the cosmetic self. It's not just that most of our media narratives are populated by the beautiful. The intact, cosmetic body is an individualized screen upon which a whole series of consumer-based products and services can be projected. The unending material demands of the cosmetic body are a mainstay of late capitalism. I was in a restaurant with a not unintelligent friend when we saw a severely disfigured person. My friend remarked, "That guy could get plastic surgery but he likes looking like that." The notion was so crazy I could hardly fathom where it came from until I realized how necessary my friend found the idea that there was no abyss so deep that the physical self could not find its way back out. It was a leap of faith that the cosmetic self was, through modern technology, perfectable and eternal just as the soul was once rendered by the church.

This kind of rationalization is a wonderful mechanism in a world of such vaulting social, material and physical inequity. Believing (rather than thinking) like this is what allows us to continue to function. On the death of John Merrick, the real Elephant Man, in 1890, his doctor and friend, Sir Frederick Treves, eulogized him by describing the upright, perfect and noble figure that existed as Merrick's soul, trapped in his disfigured body. Treves, like most of us, was incapable of describing the difference — the other — in terms beyond that of a disrupted normality. This is a little like describing the qualities of black people as being essentially white inside.

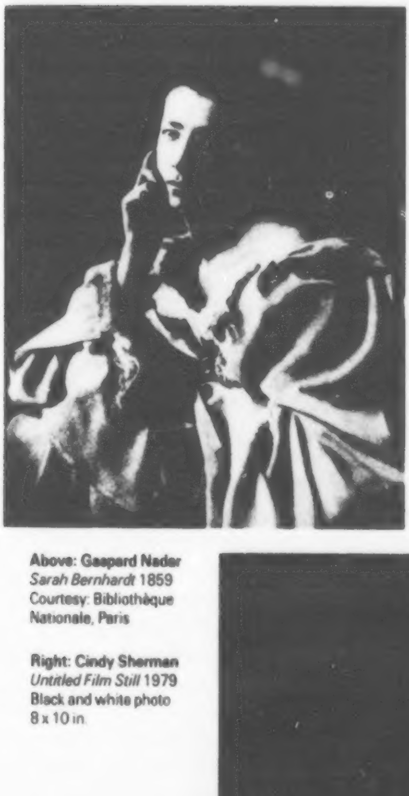
In *The Elephant Man*, David Lynch constructed a romantic, poetic figure of such passive receptivity of obsessed voyeurism as to reveal the similarity between the monstrous and the feminine. Physical freaks and beautiful women become inherently objectified by the gaze. Certainly the central scene of *The Phantom*, and indeed one of the central moments in cinema itself, is the unmasking scene, in which the beautiful girl plucks the mask from the Phantom's face. The drama of the scene turns not so much on revealing the Phantom's hideousness but in focussing on the lovely but horrified face of the young girl (the object of the Phantom's love) looking at the Phantom looking at her — a reciprocal exchange of horror in both seeing and being seen.

In her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey argued that the audience of all cinema is male (the constructed male gaze) and that women are the Ultimate Other and object of that gaze. Visual horror provides a slightly different turn on that argument. It's not the sight of the monster that scares the girl, but her being gazed on and objectified by someone who sees her as the Ultimate Other, a complex set of conscious and unconscious viewpoints that, in horror movies, turn women into monstrous Others and men into feminized, voyeuristic monsters, a set of poisonous reflections nurtured by a culture that still deeply fears that which is different from itself in body, mind or spirit.

By Geoffrey James

The Revolver

PHOTOGRAPHY: AFTER 150 YEARS, DO WE COME TO PRAISE OR BURY IT?



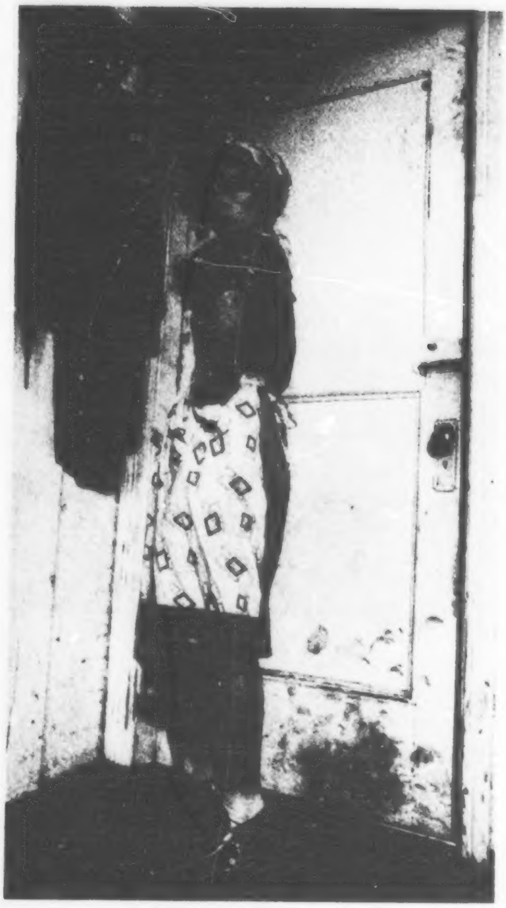
Above: Gaspard Nadar
Sarah Bernhardt 1859
Courtesy: Bibliothèque
Nationale, Paris

Right: Cindy Sherman
Untitled Film Still 1979
Black and white photo
8 x 10 in.

"You know exactly what I think of photography. I would like to see it make people despise painting until something else will make photography unbearable." Marcel Duchamp in a letter to Alfred Stieglitz.

Photography, whose birth was announced in 1839, just 50 years after the French Revolution, has never had much luck with its anniversaries. In 1889, when the medium was 50 years old, people had not yet caught the mania for endless retrospection, for celebrating events simply because of large, round figures. And in 1939, attention was elsewhere, since every sentient being knew that the world was about to sink into another major war. But that anniversary did at least produce Beaumont Newhall's *The History of Photography* (published in its final form in 1949), which, while necessarily imperfect, was the first intelligent attempt to map the medium's achievements and aesthetic terrain. Now the sesquicentennial is upon us, rubbing shoulders with the bicentennial of the French Revolution. Both birthdays, I sense, are being celebrated in a manner that is more dutiful than fervent.

What photography and the French Revolution have in common is that in recent years both have taken a beating at the hands of revisionists. Questioning of the revolution has come largely from the academic right, which has suggested that the great upheaval in France affected little deep structural change, brought no great material progress and left the poor just as badly off — and this at the cost of the Terror and the genocidal Wars of the Vendée. The frontal assault on photography has tended to come from the academic left. It has assailed the medium's old liberal-humanistic pieties — the notion that photography is the ideal medium to explain human beings to each other. Photography's commerce with the external world is now deeply suspect. According to current orthodoxy, no image is innocent, but is inculpated in some larger plot. We all know the terms. Commodity fetishism. Scopophilia. Or, a recent favorite from the American critic Abigail Solomon-Godeau, retrograde bourgeois humanism. Such is the belief in the mediating power of the photograph that it takes a certain willed naiveté to talk of the photographic subject. As Donald Kuspit recently put it, in a remark that



Cindy Sherman
Untitled Film Still 1979
Black and white photo
8 x 10 in.

sums up much current artworld thinking: "The idea that it [photography] is the record of a direct observation seems quaint. Photography's truth claim seems of less interest than its power to position consciousness."

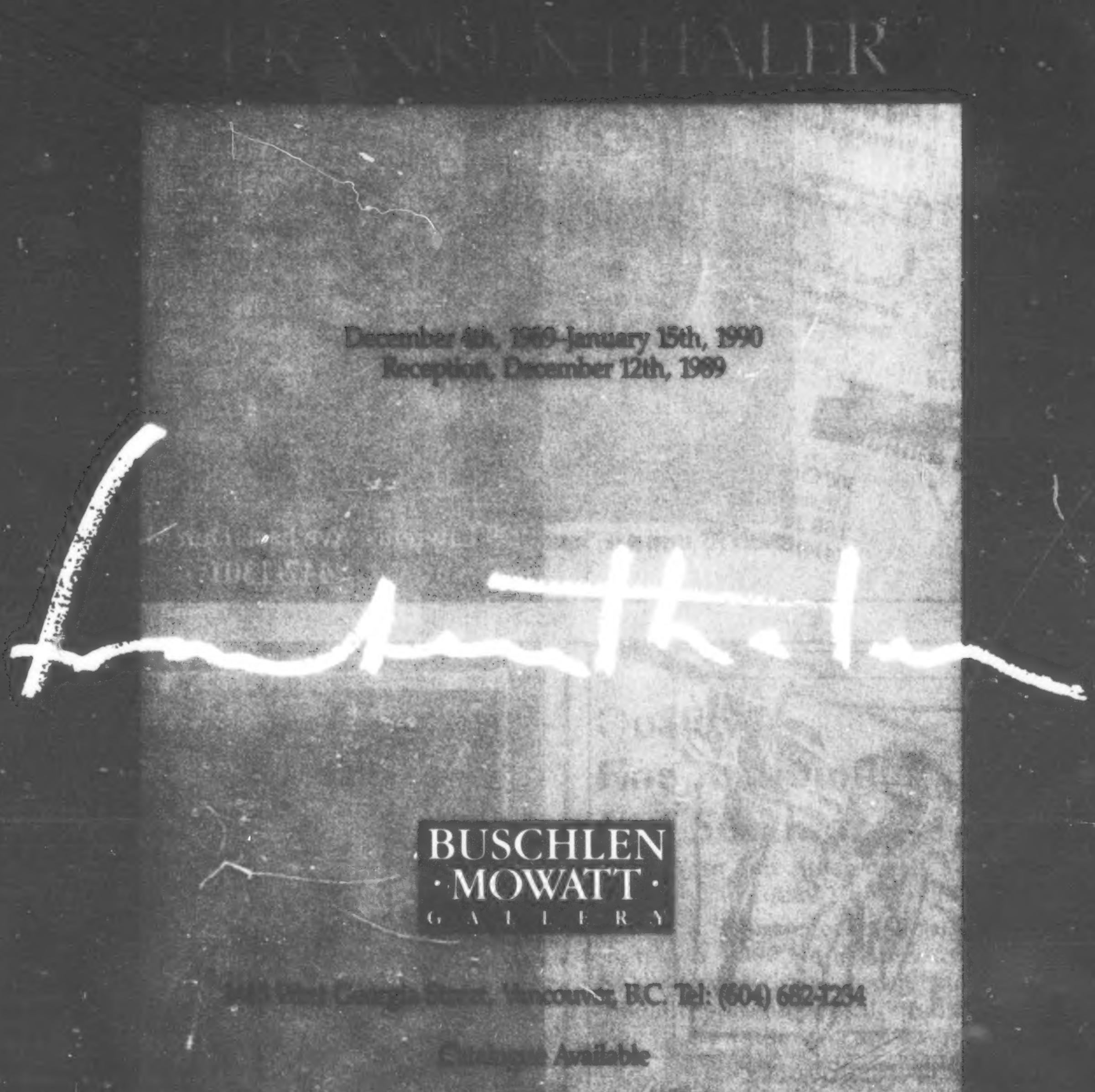
Given this doubt about photography's capacity to tell us anything directly about the world we live in, it is hardly surprising that there is a slightly schizoid nature to the current festivities. How, after all, does one praise photography when at the same time one wants to bury it in the rubble of deconstruction? This uneasy co-existence of the new skepticism with an older, less knowingly sophisticated photographic tradition is apparent in some of the large photography retrospectives in North America. (Not, however, in Canada. One of the few Canadian institutions to collect photography in depth, the National Gallery, managed to sidestep the whole question of the medium's current status by showing the photographs of Yousuf Karsh, although they did mount a small show entitled *Cherished Image: Portraits from 150 Years of Photography*.) In Washington, the National Gallery of Art mounted a sprawling compendium of the history of photography that moved chronologically from daguerreotypes and calotypes through home snapshots to what has now become the regulation Cindy Sherman and Gilbert and George. There was in this exhibition the usual vivid contrast in scale between the most recent work and that which preceded it for some 140 years — between photographs, intimate in size, that were produced for a variety of motives, many of them having nothing to do with the world of art, and large-scale objects designed and fabricated with the sole purpose of being exhibited.

But the disjunction between the postmodern and the modern was even more pronounced when one compared the reception of Washington's National Gallery show with that of *The Photography of Invention*, a large survey of "synthetic" photography at the nearby National Museum of American Art. The difference was not just that between a crowded Sunday afternoon space and a nearly deserted one (the National Gallery, after all, has a built-in drawing power). The real difference was in the public reaction. At the National Gallery, people peered at the photographs, pointed, buttonholed their friends, creating a sound level not usually associated with the typical museum hush. This power to involve, this genuine popularity, has been one of photography's more unforgivable aspects (along with its mechanical nature and its repeatability) and one of the reasons for Charles Baudelaire's famous tirade in 1859 against the vulgarity of the medium — a cry that has been picked up by the avant garde ever since.

At the National Museum of American Art, the atmosphere of its sparsely populated rooms more closely resembled that of an exhibition of contemporary art. That is to say, initiates carried out a swift professional stock-taking, more interested in the lineup than the actual work. (Nothing, of course, is more quickly consumed than the visual arts.) The less knowing surveyed the generally large-scale works from a distance, advancing only to read the wall labels and the occasional "explanations" furnished by the exhibition's organizers. We were in a different world.

The schism that exists in photography seems deep, possibly unbridgeable. Over the past decade, the discourse of photographic modernism — always, it must be admitted, a little threadbare when viewed from the academic high ground — has been largely replaced by a "theory" of postmodernism, an amalgam of late Marxism, post-Freudian psychoanalytic thinking, deconstructivist textual analysis and a dash of pure apocalyptic panic. The change in the discourse surrounding photography has rarely been confrontational, although the occasional critic will stick her neck out. One such is Solomon-Godeau who, in a 1984 essay entitled "Photography After Art Photography," characterized the tradition of fine art photography as having lapsed into a vitiated academic formalism. As she put it, "Yet hostage still to a modernist allegiance to the autonomy, self-referentiality and transcendence of the work of art, art photography has systematically engineered its own irrelevance and triviality." Solomon-Godeau's tendency to proceed by assertion notwithstanding, she does make a few good points. It is hard to resist the conclusion that there are dwindling possibilities within the modernist tradition, that much "fine art" photography has been subsumed by the genres into which it falls.

And yet, although her essay is only five years old, it is hard to believe in the continuing vitality of Solomon-Godeau's alternative, of what she describes as "socially grounded, critical and potentially radical art practice" that focuses on issues of representation as such. The narrow range of much of this work, its frequent didacticism, its undue dependence on theoretical justification, do not hold the promise of a long shelf life. How long can a claim to radicality be maintained when such art practice is in fact the dominant institutional mode? And how socially grounded is any art practice that requires, as the price of admission, familiarity with its highly academic discourse? There is a danger that what may finally make photography unbearable, in Duchamp's canny prediction, is its pretentiousness.



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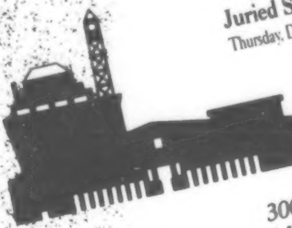

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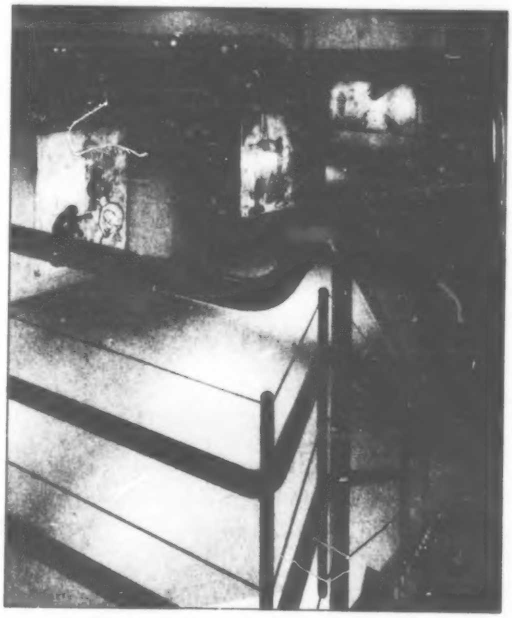

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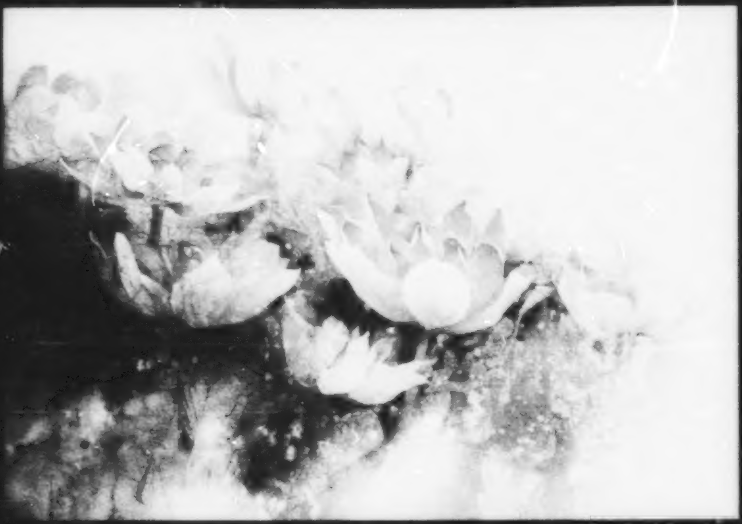
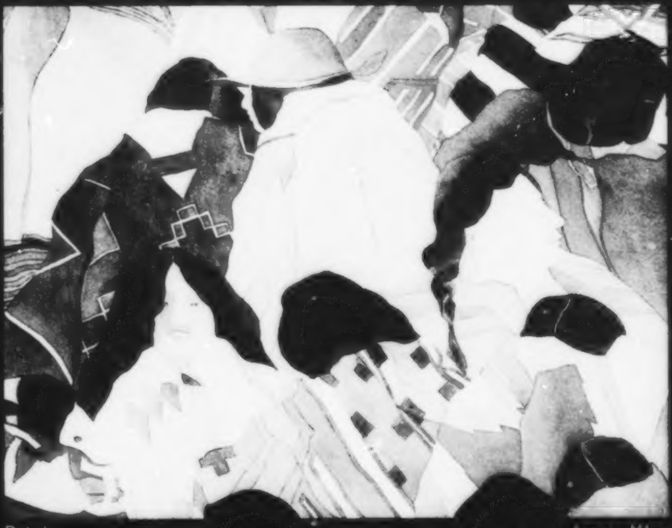
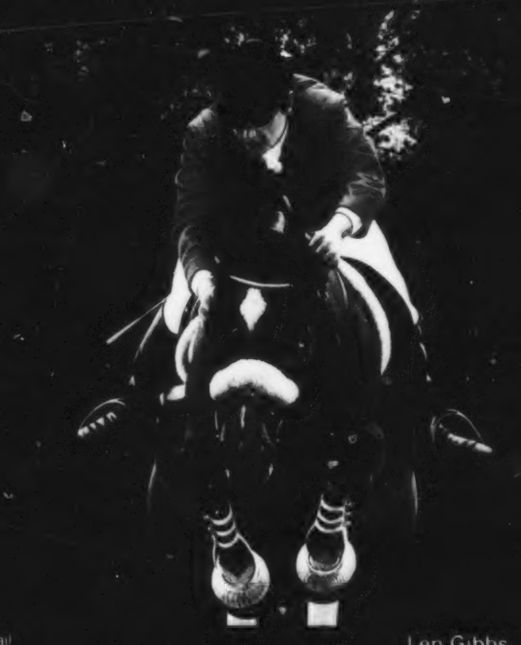


Detail Ed Drahanchuk



Detail Irene Klar



Detail Len Gibbs

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Montreal artist Guy Bourassa's installation at the Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa plays on his fascination for the instant an object becomes a sculpture. Bourassa's previous installations have focused on iconic figures culled from photographic history (for example, the culturally significant *The Family of Man* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1955, and Lewis Hine's documentation of the worker). Bourassa's recent *Modèle/Mesure* (1988), shown in Ottawa, consists of seven sculptural totems incorporating found and familiar commercial artifacts transformed in a variety of ways, which pay homage to specific moments of modernist art and design. The base of each sculpture, a wheeled mobile steel trolley, furnishes the installation with a showroom mix-and-match character. *Better Homes and Gardens* (1988) — an assemblage of champagne glasses, veneered surfaces and a notched parapet — parodies magazines of lifestyle design and social climbing. For *sédiment*, the artist resurfaced a '50s chair (designed by Danish architect Arne Jacobsen) with dried cracked clay. This sculpture metaphorically suggests a liquidated modernism and yet the beauty of the newly created object hints at evolution rather than demise.

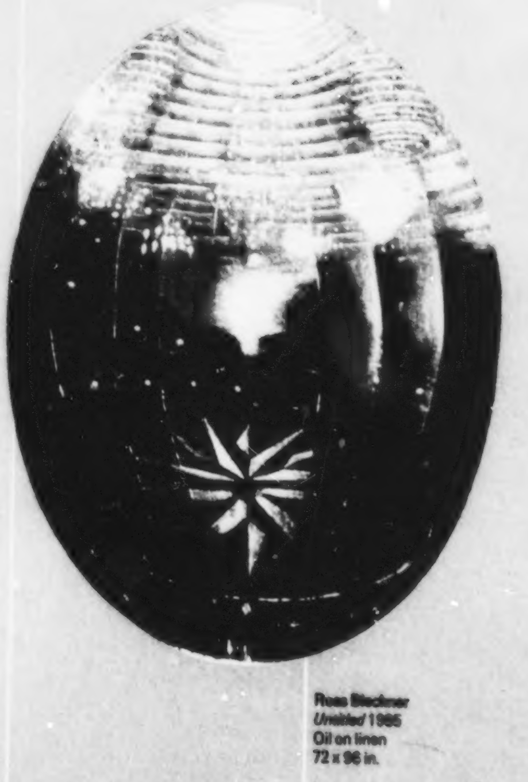
This winter in Montreal, Bourassa shows two new installations, *L'effet CHANEL* and *Le salon d'automne*, at Montreal's Galerie Christiane Chassay from February 24 to March 24. The new works pursue his preoccupation with the domestic environment, this time blurring the distinctions of feminine fashion, home furniture and interior decoration. *Kitty Scott*

American painter Ross Bleckner can claim, among other central accomplishments, a certain amount of credit for reinvesting painting, everywhere deemed dead, with a particular kind of energy that comes from a profligate application of easy-to-access imagery.

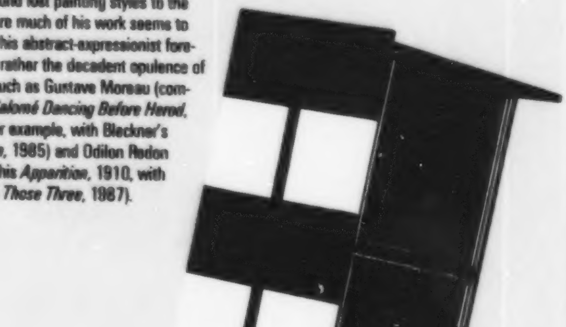
From the early stripe paintings like *The Forest* (1981), which insisted on an emotional rather than optical performance, through his famous image paintings of jewel-encrusted gates, sparkling chandeliers and mystic, glowing urns bundled with operatic flowers (1984-86), to his recent architectonic sublimities of dotted light like *Architecture of the Sky I* (1988) and *Always Saying Goodbye* (1987), Bleckner has fearlessly and obsessively run to ground lost painting styles to the point where much of his work seems to recall not his abstract-expressionist forebears but rather the decadent opulence of painters such as Gustave Moreau (compare his *Salomé Dancing Before Herod*, c.1870, for example, with Bleckner's *Memoriam*, 1985) and Odilon Redon (compare his *Apparition*, 1910, with Bleckner's *Those Three*, 1987).

What keeps these remarkable pictures from falling by some kitsch wayside — for indeed, paintings like *Those Three*, with its extravagant flowers and its glowing ascendent dove, do look somewhat like potboilers on velvet — is their undeniable dignity, their *ubi sunt* plangency, widely assumed to be (with corroboration from Bleckner himself) in the service of memorializing those who have died of AIDS (Bleckner has admitted that the welt-like spots dispersed randomly over the surface of *Those Three*, for example, are his reading of the Kaposi's sarcoma sores that blight the bodies of many AIDS victims). Later paintings like *Recover* (1988) seem to transcend the medical this-ness of the dark memorials, offering a guarded vision of a future whose hope, according to Bleckner, lies in our learning not to ghettoize despair but to share it and in so doing, find a way beyond it.

An important survey of Bleckner's works, organized by the Milwaukee Art Museum, opens at the Art Gallery of Ontario on February 9. *Gary Michael Dault*



Ross Bleckner
Untitled 1985
Oil on linen
72 x 96 in.



Guy Bourassa
d'ordre et de commodité 1988
Paint, stereo console, dolly
Stereo: 27 x 68 x 16 ½ in.
Dolly: 30 x 30 x 8 ¼ in.

Roland Brener is a high-tech *bricoleur*, a handyman who combs electronic shops, toy stores and office equipment outlets for the consumer goods that comprise his highly sophisticated yet charmingly imaginative sculptures. Working in his studio in Victoria, B.C., Brener makes sculptures that speak of our present fascination with the advances of technology, an enthusiasm tempered by distrust for objects that are a little too slick and obviously mass-produced. Using motors, mercury switches and computer-controlled electromechanical devices to create robots that move and emit sound, Brener's sculptures are often ironically humorous and faintly sinister reflections of the foibles of contemporary life.

In 1987, Brener represented Canada at the 19th Sao Paulo International Bienal and in 1988 was one of the two artists selected for the Venice Biennale. This winter, Vancouver audiences can see Brener's most recent productions at the Vancouver Art Gallery until January 21. *British Columbia Contemporary: Roland Brener* comprises a complex new piece. Modelling his new creation after a common children's toy, the articulated snake, Brener's two snakelike components traverse the gallery's main floor rotunda through a combination of electromechanical movements. Entitled *Sweeper*, the "snakes" are a departure for Brener, who has previously relied on ropes and pedestals to contain his sculptures' movements. They now circulate freely in the viewers' space.

Toronto will also have a chance to see more of Brener's recent works when they appear in a solo show at the Olga Korper Gallery from February 3 to 28.

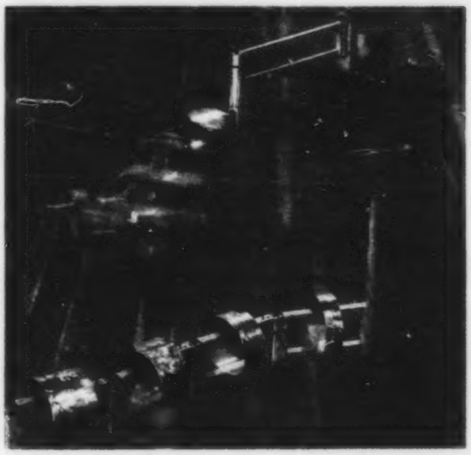
Linda Genereux

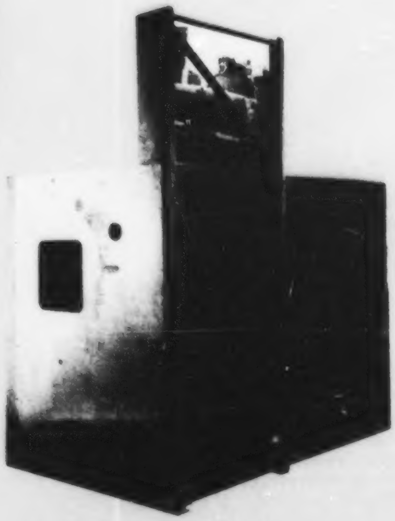
This winter, the Alberta College of Art Gallery mounts a tightly focused exhibition of sculptures and photographs by Toronto artist Robin Collyer (February 9 to March 1). Organized by gallery director/curator and artist Ron Moppett with a catalogue text by Toronto art writer Jeanne Randolph, the exhibition includes a pivotal early work from 1972 by Collyer entitled *Likers* (two small misshapen, floor-bound oblongs made of rough scrap metal), as well as a selection of sculptures from the 1980s, including *Stadium* (1988) and *Hearth* (1988) and new work.

In his work, Collyer seeks to address the way in which culture is ordered, developing sculptural assemblages that juxtapose objects and images (laden with preexisting meanings) with mute, common materials. The result is a body of work that actively questions the impact of technology on the modern world. Each work relies on complex shifts in scale, materials and reference in order to create a conflict in the mind of the viewer. *Stadium*, for example, is composed of standard shelving units like those used in a corner variety store, a large back-lit light box like those used in bus shelter ads, and three simple metal benches. All three elements are united by a sprayed coating that simulates the effect of a rough-cast metal surface. While this work perhaps refers to the construction of a new domed stadium in Toronto, in general it addresses the contemporary conflation of advertising, sports and the mass consumption of culture. As with all of Collyer's work we are left with an uneasy feeling as to our implication in the perpetuation of the technological ethos and a society of spectacle.

Bruce Grenville

Thaddeus Howlonia, *Jolicure, October 1981* One of 26 black-and-white photographs of the Tantramar saltmarshes at the head of the Bay of Fundy in his book, *Dykelands* (McGill-Queen's University Press 1989)





Above: Roland Brener
Sweeper 1989
Aluminum, steel
35 x 30 ft.
Right: Robin Collyer
NO TV/Stoa Brokdaon Finis 1987
Steel, aluminum, color film transparency, lightbox, Plexiglas, vacuum-formed plastic
90 x 108 x 53 ¼ in.

In his most recent series of paintings and works on paper (at the Sable-Castelli Gallery in Toronto from January 13 to February 3), Will Gorlitz continues his philosophical investigations into the nature of being and knowing. For Gorlitz, systems of representation are inextricably linked to one another, to cultural and political circumstance, and to the audience. In this interrelationship, they thus tell us as much about *how* they describe as about the reality they propose.

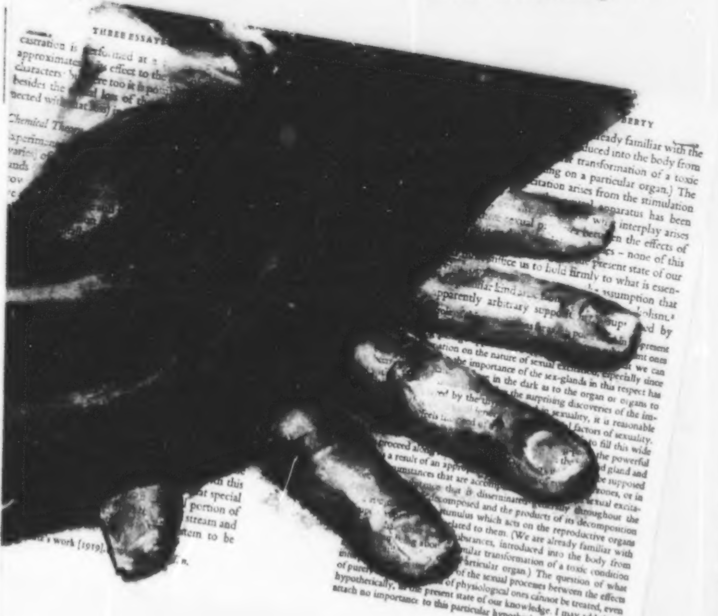
Working, as always, in a realistic manner, Gorlitz presents the viewer with the visual equivalents of philosophical propositions, setting up a dialectic between visual and textual representations of reality. The paintings in this show, collectively entitled *Catharsis* (1989), refer the viewer to classical notions about the emotionally purifying effects of art. Flanked by torn-off open bookcovers, each painting — infinitely larger than the covers — appears to have burst forth and supplanted the text. The works on paper use Freud's "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" as their point of reference. Each work is a vertical grouping of three photocopies of facing pages from Freud's text. The centre pages are flanked above and below by oil pastel drawings of perfectly ripe fruit fallen into black mud. The central images — an open door, a flashlight and a feather, a glowing hotplate, a shoehorn, an umbrella, and so forth — are all charged with meanings as we have learned from Freud's writings.

By drawing on classical and modern notions about the nature of human experience, Gorlitz presents a model of how philosophical frames of reference shape that experience. The concordance and discordance between representation and reality and between what we see, and feel, when we see ourselves reflected in systems of representation are then the real subject matter of Gorlitz's work. *Ellie Town*

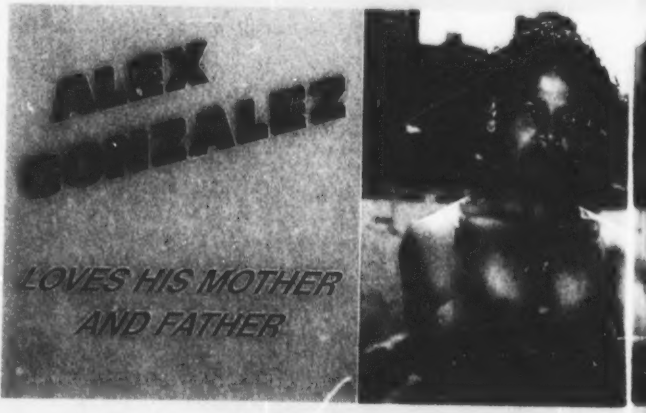
In making art, Ken Lum unabashedly shuttles between sculpture, photography, and painting. In each case he covers different subject matter, but all are conceived within the aesthetic framework of the art from the '60s and '70s that he then infuses with social content. More than 30 of Lum's works are being pulled together for an exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, curated by Bruce Ferguson, from February 24 to April 29, 1990.

Lum mirrors the sanctity of art aesthetics with showroom consumerism, corporate logos, studio portraiture and mass-media signage; the resulting dialogue generates an ironic and paradoxical edge. The configuration of his furniture pieces (usually sofas and side tables placed in various formal arrangements) suggests the geometry and self-referential closure of minimalist sculpture, but being composed of furniture, they resonate with social interaction. The generic logos attached to his photographic portraits mimic the shaped canvases of hard-edge abstraction and place the notion of individuality in conflict with corporate identity. His *Language Paintings* (1987) recall Pop canvases like those of Lichtenstein and Ruscha, but the irrationality of the words exaggerates the foreignness of "other" languages. Despite the deliberate programs of his works, Lum's underlying wit introduces a dimension that counteracts rhetoric, and makes the work ultimately accessible.

Having received considerable attention in Europe and the United States, this exhibition promises to be the most complete statement of this Vancouver-born artist to be seen by Canadian audiences. After Winnipeg, the exhibition tours to the Vancouver Art Gallery (August 15 to October 8) and then on to Rotterdam. *Keith Wallace*



Will Gorlitz
Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (detail) 1989
Oil pastel on text and paper
13 x 10 in.


ALEX GONZALEZ
LOVES HIS MOTHER AND FATHER

Ken Lum
Alex Gonzalez Loves His Father and Mother 1989
C-print and vinyl on Plexiglas
60 x 60 x 2 ½ in.

Gas flames, copper, beeswax, plate glass and lead are some of the materials that recur in the work of Vancouver artist Al McWilliams. Each possesses its own peculiar qualities — beeswax is fragrant, enveloping and skinlike; lead is physically dense and toxic. They are also imbued with extensive cultural, social and economic histories, and when placed together, as McWilliams often uses them, the residue of their associations arises as an interactive and emotive component of his elegant compositions.

New work by McWilliams was presented at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge in the fall. Long recognized as a sculptor — which may explain his choice of materials — in recent years McWilliams has moved his focus from the floor to the wall. In this exhibition, family photographs of children and relatives are overlayed with beeswax or sandblasted glass and placed next to rectangular lead panels studded with Braille. Other works use photographic fragments derived from a narrative relief embellishing the façade of a Milan cathedral. The Braille translates into basic wording — "no" or "I/me" — and is abstract in form but certainly not in meaning.

Together, the materials, images and Braille reverberate between past and present, language and identity. The large scale of these pieces continues to force an awareness of our own bodies in relationship to them, and in so doing sustain McWilliams' scuptural concerns. His work will be exhibited at the Equinox Gallery in Vancouver from February 7 to March 3, and at Cold City Gallery in Toronto from March 6 to 31. *Keith Wallace*

Sandra Meigs, a purple painter of populist imagery, has applied her sense of humor to the prosaic in an examination of western themes in her exhibition *Love Muscle* (1989), to be shown at Galerie Chantal Boulanger in Montreal from December 2 to January 13.

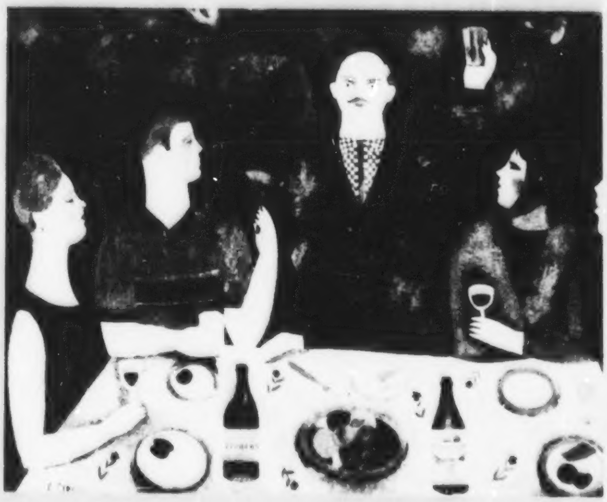
Consisting of 21 oil paintings, the exhibition is divided into two narrative camps, each accompanied by its own text. The paintings in the first narrative sequence are cartoonlike representations of scenes from western pulp novels taken one step further than decorum usually allows. Fiction takes on exaggerated dimensions. Meigs's *into* shows a lady-in-distress lying on train tracks and severed in two by a long-gone engine; *she* depicts a cowgirl masturbating under a tree; in *whispered*, a cowboy is dwarfed by the enormous dimensions of his horse. The titles of each of these works — emblazoned in big plastic letters on each respective frame — tell the story: "when," "she," "whispered," "penetrate," "his," etc. The other 10 paintings in the show are rendered in a more abstract style using plastic, glossy primary colors to create crude representations. These titles, in turn, read as a series of proclamations: "DIE NOW," "DENY NOW," "BLUNDER NOW," "ACT NOW," and so on.

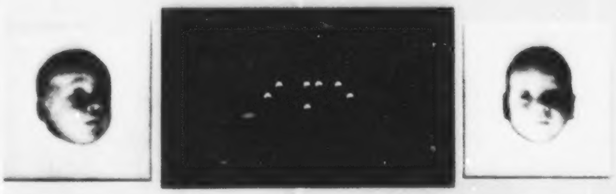
In this work, Meigs embraces the mediocre by making "fine art" out of imagery adopted from popular culture and reminting it with a nightmarish intensity. Meigs's fictive and visual distortions are signatures of her sense of humor and her acute ability to analyze what is oppressive in this culture. *Donna Lypchuk*

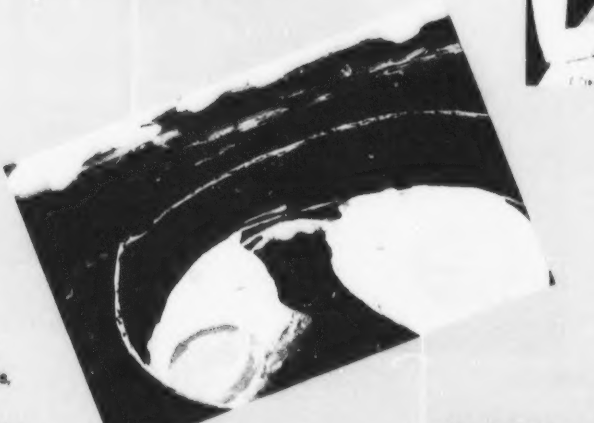
Even Toronto's Yorkville gallery strip is feeling the effects of *glasnost*. This past June, Russian emigrée Marina Abony opened her elegant Moscow Art Gallery on Bellair Street to sell contemporary mainstream Soviet art.

At first blush the work seems grey and anachronistic, at least to Western eyes more familiar with postmodern preoccupations. At the Moscow Art Gallery there is nary a photographic appropriation nor a reference to electronic media or urban psychosis. Instead you'll find gentle, careful landscapes veiled in mist (Timchenko), numerous nightscapes (Obrosov, Danshin), naïve portraits (Strulev), and twilit still lives (Sokolov). The paintings are almost exclusively figurative, technically accomplished, and so unfashionable they're fascinating.

In staying with the traditional, is Abony running against the wind or showing exceptional savvy? (At a recent London auction, a quarter of the lots of Soviet avant-garde work went unsold.) Upcoming shows at the Moscow Art Gallery, including a December Christmas exhibition and Latvian and Ukrainian art in the spring, should bear her out. *Betty Ann Jordan*







Above: Al McWilliams
I/me 1989
Beeswax on photographs,
silver leaf on lead
54 x 16 in.
Far right: Yevgueny Strulev
Wedding Toast 1967
Tempera on board, paper
43 x 35 in.

Above: Sandra Meigs
Rocker (detail) 1989
Oil on canvas
40 x 28 in.

The three photographic installations at Galerie Optica last fall by Montreal artist Roberto Pellegrinuzzi disrupt photography's claim toward impartial representation. In these 1988 works, *La Chute*, *Le Naufrage* and *Le Passage*, Pellegrinuzzi repeats a method used in earlier installations and photographs the different sides of old wooden furniture, then applies the actual pieces of the photographs to life-size replicas. The reconstructed photo-finished furniture is then layered with a personal photo or positioned beside a landscape photo that hangs on the wall. From a distance, the installation has a transient, spectral effect; the pale grey tones and the reproduction of worn wood dissolves into a tenuous trompe-l'oeil flatness that floats in contrast to the subtly colored wood floor and white walls of the gallery. Pellegrinuzzi's installations materialize from the two-dimensional world of photography, but seen in person, they cross over to the world of objecthood where both the gallery floor and wall seem to act as support.

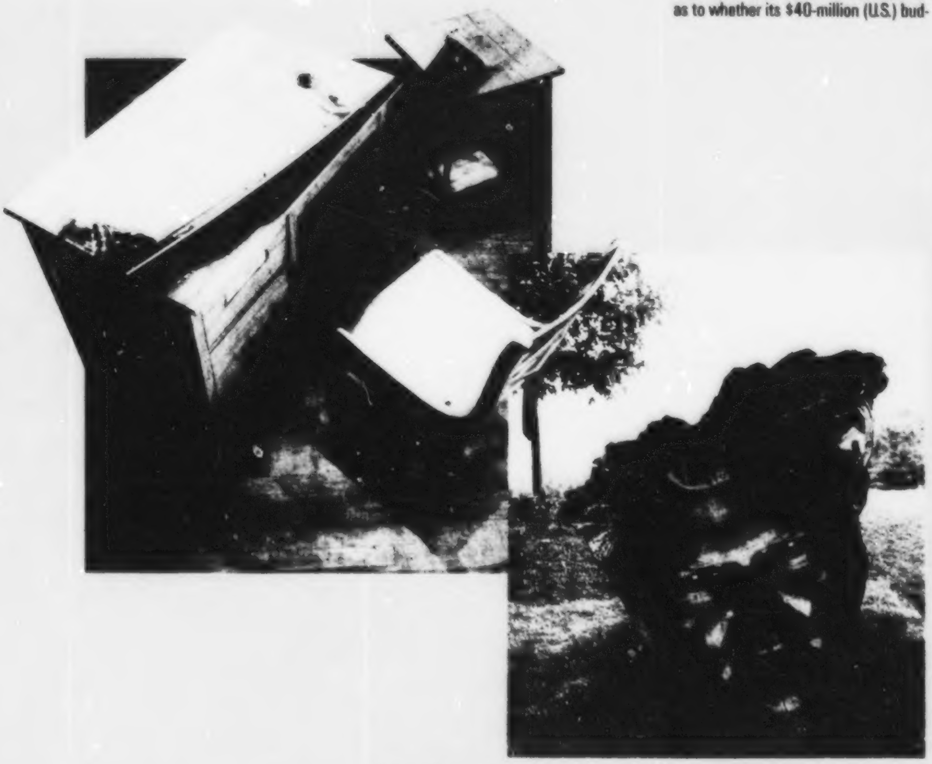
Pellegrinuzzi will be showing the 1988 installations as well as new work, variations on this theme, at Toronto's YYZ gallery from January 10 to February 3.
Kitty Scott

Evan Penny's six-foot-high bronze *Mask* (1989) is a neck-swivelling new addition to the Donald Forster Sculpture Park on the grounds of the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre in Guelph. Depending on your vantage point, *Mask* 's concave surface can appear convex. Both monumental along the lines of Mt. Rushmore's sunswept presidents and elusive as the Wizard of Oz's shimmering face, Penny's work is an exercise in shadow alchemy. Quite possibly a shoo-in, *Mask* was winner of the Centre's 1988 National Sculpture Competition, sponsored by Imperial Tobacco Ltd.
Betty Ann Jordan

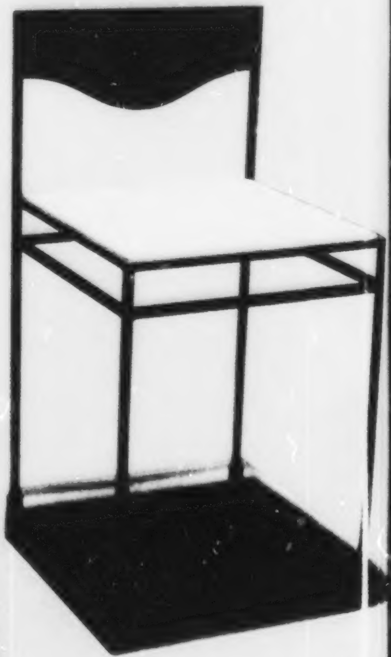
Canadian architect Hani Rashid lives in New York City. His younger brother, Karim, is a designer in Toronto. Together they challenge the rational and problem-solving methodologies of architecture.

A former pupil of theorist Daniel Libeskind, Hani explores "the limits beyond which forms become acceptable." Until recently, he confined his work to models, drawings and installations in an attempt to investigate form freed from pragmatics and to reintroduce poetic meaning into architecture. Last year, however, he and his partner, Lise Anne Couture (also a Canadian), won an international architectural competition in Los Angeles. *Steel Cloud*, their monument to immigrants from the Pacific Rim, has gained considerable notoriety and there is some question as to whether its $40-million (U.S.) budget will be raised. Labelled deconstructivist, this anti-monument is an enormous chaos of metal girders and steel beams designed to fly precariously over the Hollywood Freeway. Intentionally incomplete and fragmented, *Steel Cloud* suggests the futility of establishing a dominant style of architecture. As a kind of optical machine, it reassesses the formal vocabulary of commemorative monuments by displacing verticality, stability and unity. It is also a kind of entertainment centre. Visitors will pass through an anti-hierarchical program of exotic gardens, ocean life, cinemas and galleries. Below, motorists will be bombarded with electronic synthesizers and liquid crystal display screens.

Karim Rashid practises industrial, furniture and fashion design in Toronto. Like Hani, he explores symbolism through metaphor and nomenclature. Karim's use of irony, however, makes his designs more familiar and accessible. *Pilgrim Chair* (1988) satirizes the vogue for collecting functional "truth to construction" antiques such as Shaker furniture. Karim's bench-chair is plain and simple, but he favors industrial steel rod over handcrafted wood. Severe and uncomfortable, *Pilgrim Chair* is irreverent of Puritan rectitude: a cross decorates its seat. If Karim's *Pilgrim Chair* plays with notions of the fashionable, Hani's *Steel Cloud* seems to deliberately resist consumption. *Rachel Gotlieb*



Above: Roberto Pellegrinuzzi
Le Passage 1989
Black-and-white photographs, furniture
Right: Evan Penny
Mask 1989
Bronze
6 ft. high



Above: Karim Rashid
Pilgrim Chair 1988
Steel rod, wood, lacquer

At Galerie René Blouin in Montreal from January 13 to February 10, Tom Sherman is showing new works: four wall pieces that are "constructed images," that is, images obtained not through traditional means like painting or drawing, but by using materials such as magnetic tape. The works elaborate on a former series entitled *Sleeping Robot Architecture* (1987) and focus on his interest in the containment of change and motion within a system. Two titles of these new works hint at this continuity: *Digital Hearts: Decisions, Decisions* (1989) and *Machine Love Hate Fear Void* (1989).

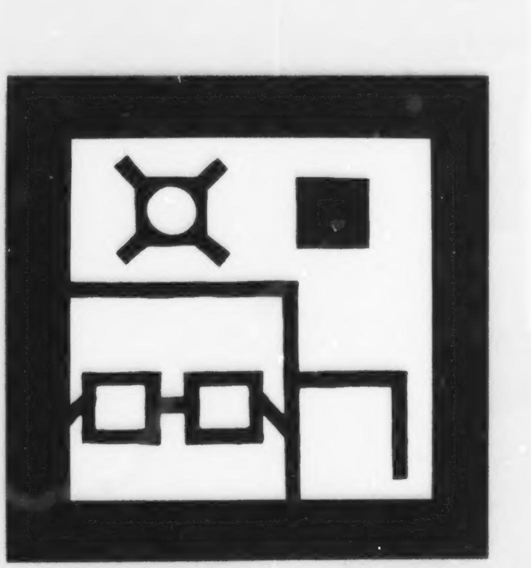
Sherman belongs to that generation of Ontario artists who came to preeminence during the '70s, and whom one might call the "enigmatic ones" for their careful insistence on not offering any resolved explanation for the interpretation of their work. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the precise meaning of Sherman's work, one can see, throughout his production, a comment on how situations are often perceived secondhand through a system that both enables and filters experience. One way of getting access to this laconic expression is perhaps to posit Sherman as using "robotic" thought and behavior as a metaphor for the increasing importance of management science and technology in an increasingly administered experience. *Serge Bérard*

An arresting spectacle greets visitors to the Hongkong Bank building in downtown Vancouver. Suspended eight storeys up, high in the vaulted ceiling, an 86-foot-long, approximately 4,000-pound pendulum sweeps back and forth across the lobby. The size and the inexorability of *The Pendulum* (1987) stop people in their tracks, jaws dropping as they gaze upward. All of which is gratifying for the sculptor who made it, 29-year-old Alan Storey. "My work comes out of a love of classical machines," says Storey, whose father is a retired physics teacher and a builder of harpsichords.

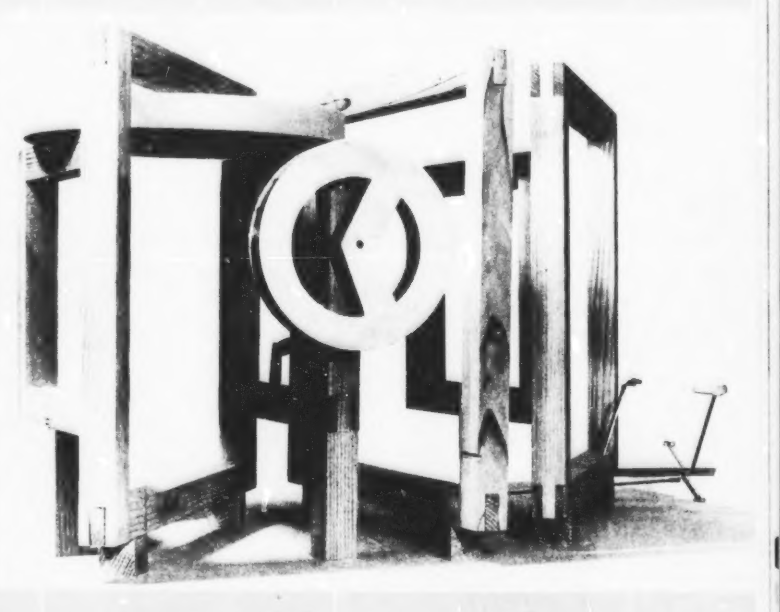
The success of *The Pendulum* has opened new horizons, and they keep getting bigger. Storey has entered a proposal for Banker's Hall, a new complex in Calgary. The space he has to work in, running between the two buildings of the complex, is less than 25 feet wide — but it's six stories high and a block long. Even this, though, pales by comparison with another proposal Storey has in the works for a "huge, gigantic project" close to California's Silicon Valley. That setting will consist of five glass office towers 20 stories high, grouped around a lagoon and subject to 35-mile-an-hour winds.

Storey's original love was gallery installations. *A Machine For Drawing On Walls* (1984), for example, pulled itself around the gallery by a motor-driven wheel and a system of weights, springs and a cantilever, leaving a line of ink one-eighth of an inch thick. ("It did different things each time it went round, and seemed to have a mind of its own.")

At present, he is preparing for an exhibition at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge, part of its *Continuum* series of contemporary Canadian sculpture exhibitions (Storey's work will be shown from December 9 to January 28). One of his ideas is to build a false floor that visitors see from neck height. There will be a dip or two in the floor, and across it will run a vehicle based on a battery-powered car that changes direction when it bumps into something. The vehicle will draw lines like those made by a harvesting combine. The effect is to recreate some of the visual elements of the surrounding countryside. "Then," Storey says, "when visitors come out, they will see the prairie landscape all around them, and get a second hit." *Michael Boxall*



Tom Sherman
Drawings From Emerging Generosity
1987
Charcoal on paper
23 x 23 in.



Alan Storey
Iron Man 1988
1:8 maquette for an installation at Art Gallery of South Okanagan, 1988
Photo: Rick Pelletier

The Vancouver Art Gallery is organizing the largest exhibition to date of works by Jeff Wall (January 20 to March 19). Despite his growing reputation abroad and several solo shows at the Ydessa Gallery in Toronto, few of Wall's works have been seen in Canada. He has been producing his large-scale cibachromes since 1977, after a period of artistic silence and art historical study at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. Of the 19 works in the exhibition, seven are from the last year of production; not a retrospective, the VAG exhibition will nonetheless allow viewers to assess the shift in Wall's concerns over the last decade.

Wall's early works are somewhat inward-looking, often making a theoretical point through a self-portrait. More recent work bears witness to the minutiae of social discord. Like Manet and Degas, artists he greatly admires, Wall aims to expose the larger structures of contemporary society through intimate moments and unconscious gestures that reveal the whole. The many visual references (which he carefully orchestrates before the camera) come from the history of painting, cinema, advertising, propaganda and his own observations of everyday life.

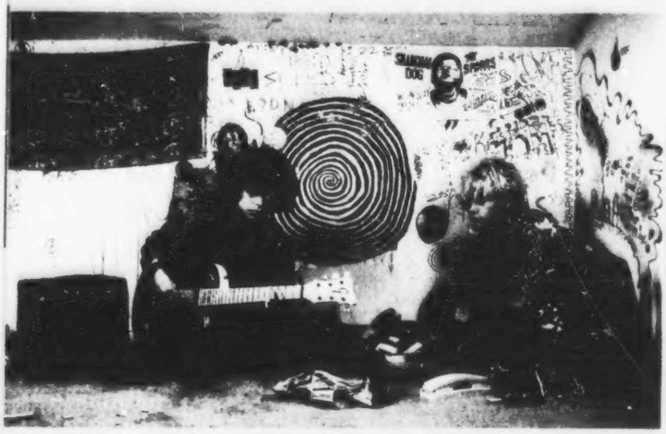
Primed by a recent month-long workshop by American artist Mary Kelly, Vancouver feminists will no doubt react to the authority of the artistic tradition Wall so compellingly invokes, a tradition that seems rooted in the privilege of the male gaze. As interesting as these debates promise to be, one really hopes that Wall's aggressive portrayal of urban contradictions, especially those involving class and race, will reach an audience larger than the art world. Vancouver is one of Wall's major subjects and he is unrelenting and ferocious in depicting its entrepreneurial greed and smug racism. It is surely for this courage as well as the well-grounded theory that informs his practise that Wall deserves acknowledgement by a larger public.

This timely exhibition, which will also be seen at the Art Gallery of Ontario (April 20 to June 10), will give Canadians a chance to see the work of their most internationally renowned artist.
Scott Watson

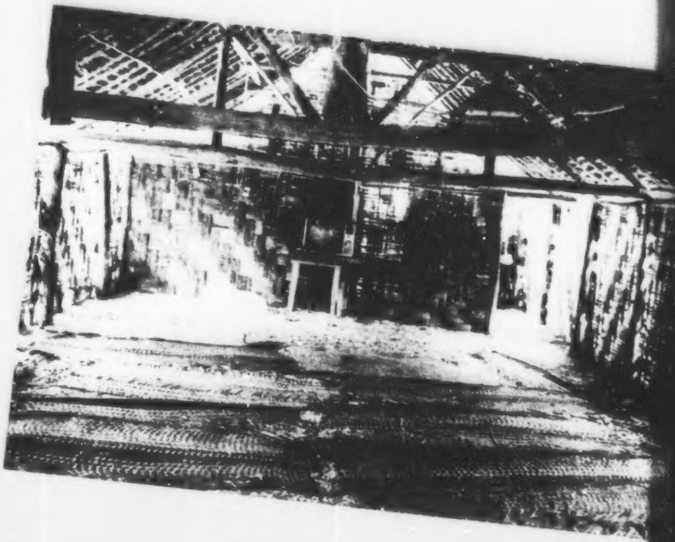
John Watt's *TV Blong Vanuatu* (1983-89), a video-television environment at Toronto's YYZ gallery from February 14 to March 10, addresses a complex set of moral and social issues — the control of information, expressions of culture and its survival. Much of what he has constructed enters into an area claimed by the quasi-sciences of archaeology and cultural anthropology, where meaning and context are based on the coding of collected artifacts and fragments. If these meanings are hypothetical, they may also be fictional...as fictional as, well, television.

By inventing 24 hours of television programming for a society that does not have television (the Republic of Vanuatu, a group of islands in the Pacific that Watt has visited several times) and showing it inside a grass hut in the gallery, Watt's crossfire strafes the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology. *TV Blong Vanuatu* takes the form of community programming, deepening its social and domestic interaction through story-telling, the exchange of goods, and the deployment of ritual. Because the "programming" is in the language of the people, Bislama, the willing viewer must extrapolate meaning from cadence and the images that are offered.

This work's celebratory aspect — the programming revolves around Vanuatu's sixth Independence Day — is so disarming that it treads dangerously into the arena of exoticism — the tourist-National Geographic view. But Watt's perspective is not condescending, nor is it a lament for a "primitive" society, in the manner of German artist Lothar Baumgarten. Whether the people of Vanuatu would construct such television shows, or even watch this programming, is not the issue. *TV Blong Vanuatu*'s unspoken agenda challenges our own television culture, which is more technological spectacle than a tactile expression of our cultural needs. It is virtually impossible to translate cultural context intact. If this is a shortcoming on Watt's part, then we can still only hope for more efforts like his in the art of our late century. ***Ihor Holubizky***



Jeff Wall
The Guitarist 1987
Cibachrome transparency,
fluorescent light,
display case
46 x 35 in.



Interior study of grass
house with TV in the
Republic of Vanuatu (1986).
A color photograph by
Robin Collyer taken
during John Watt's
research trip to Vanuatu

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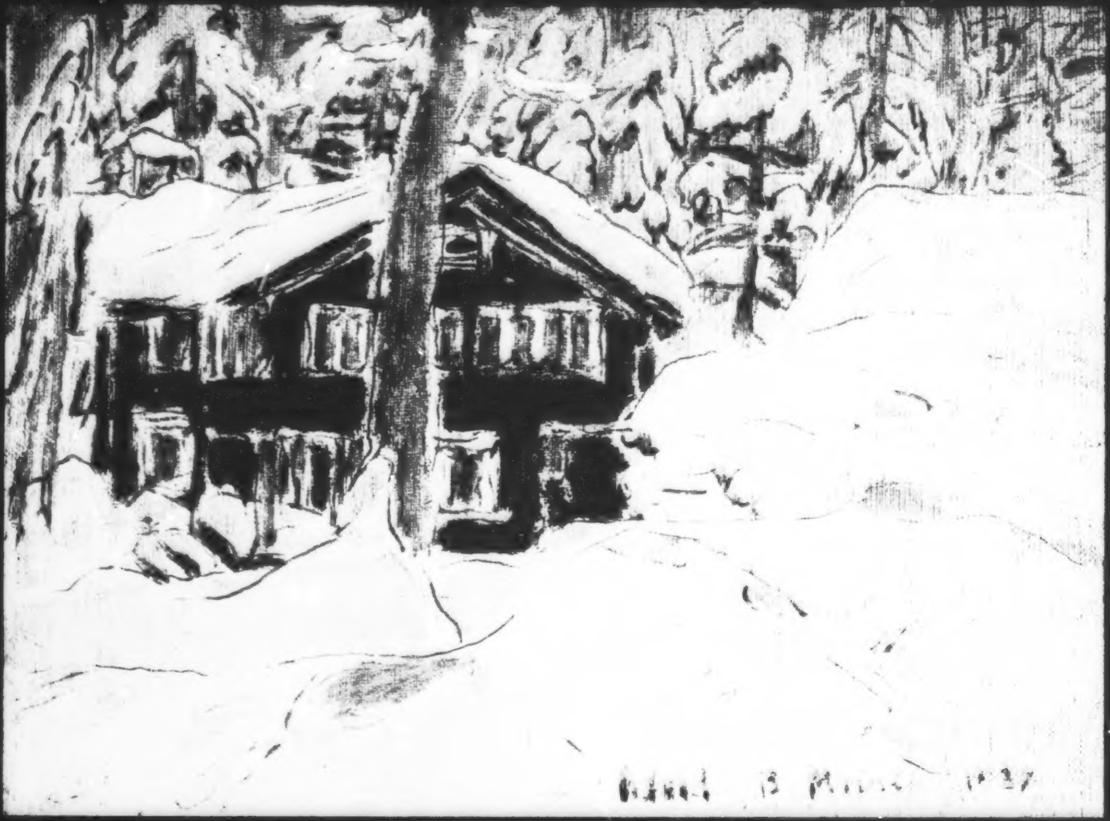

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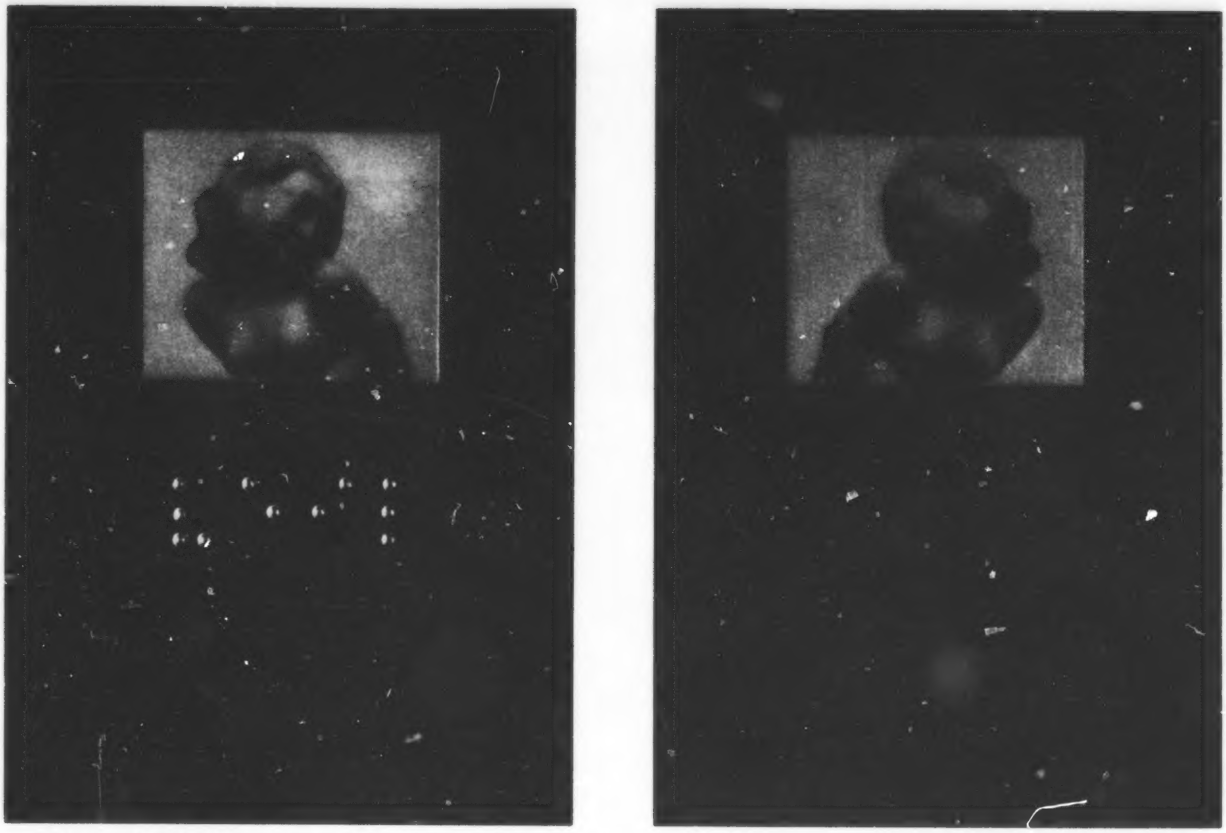

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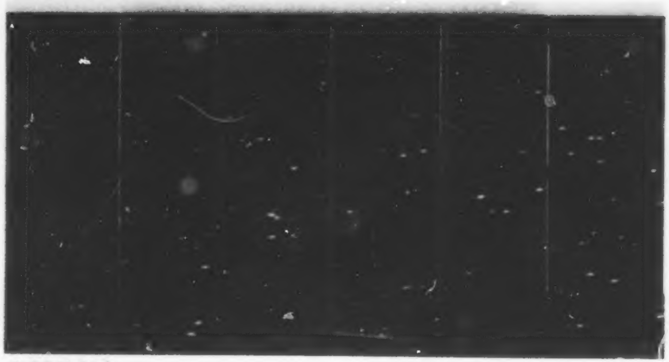

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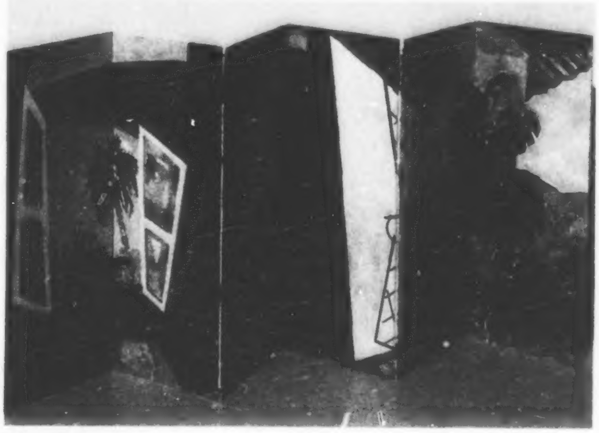

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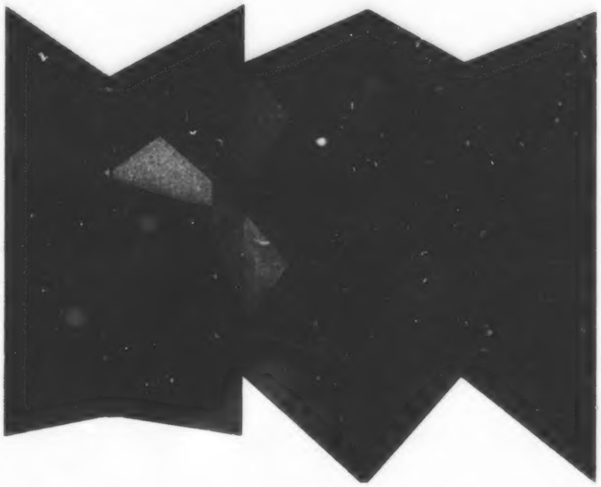

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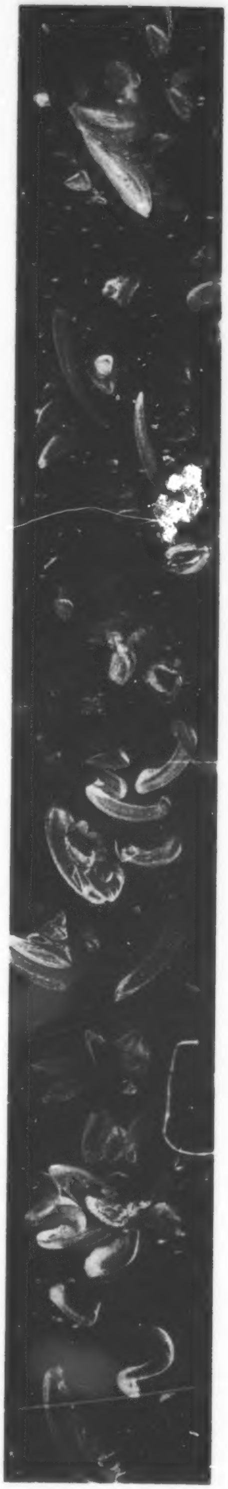

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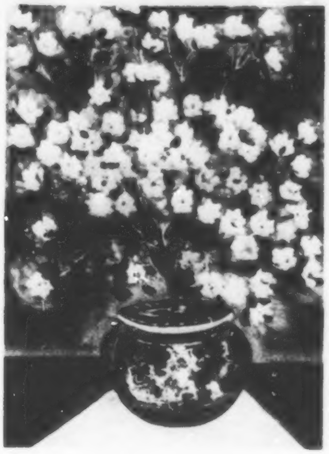

"White Azaleas" 36x24, monotype

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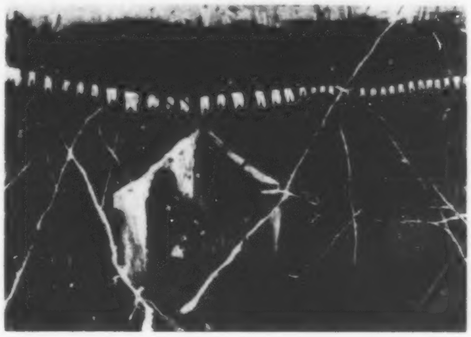

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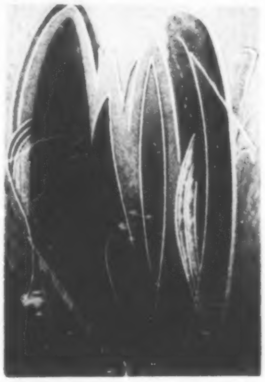
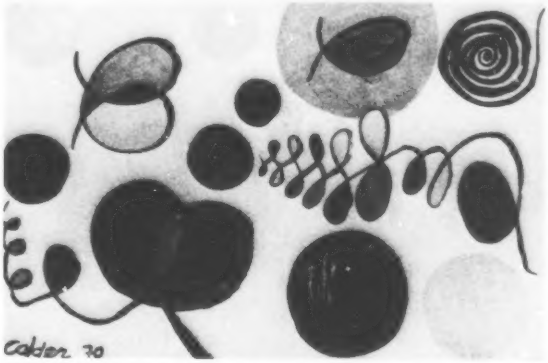


LAWREN HARRIS OIL 52X36



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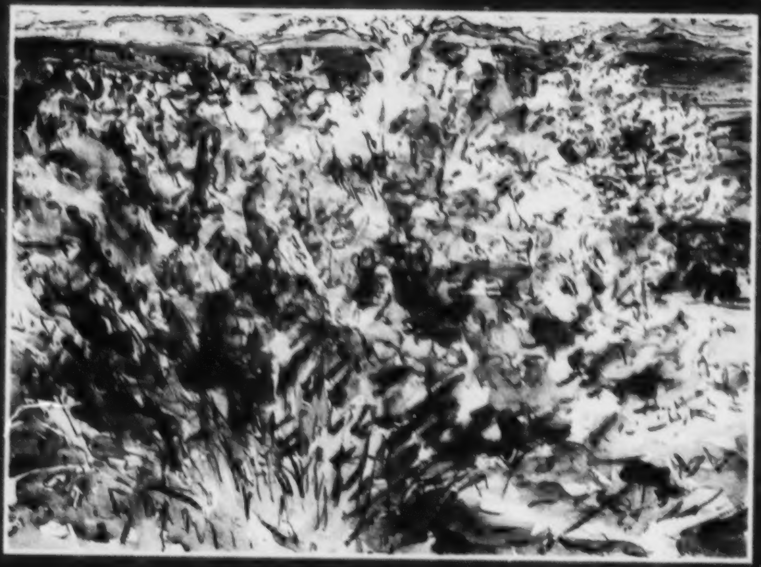

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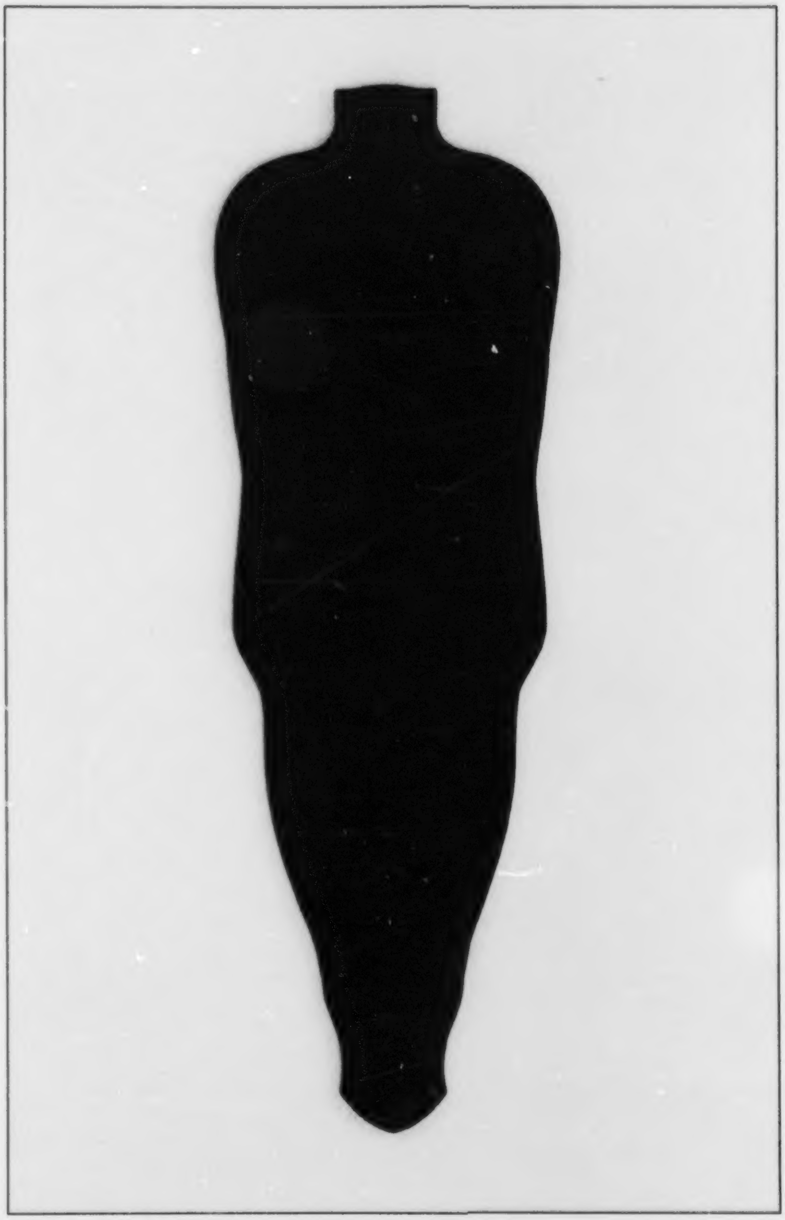
JUDITH SCHWARZ



Shadow Plate
3/8" steel
76"x24"
1986

Photograph:
Isaac Applebaum

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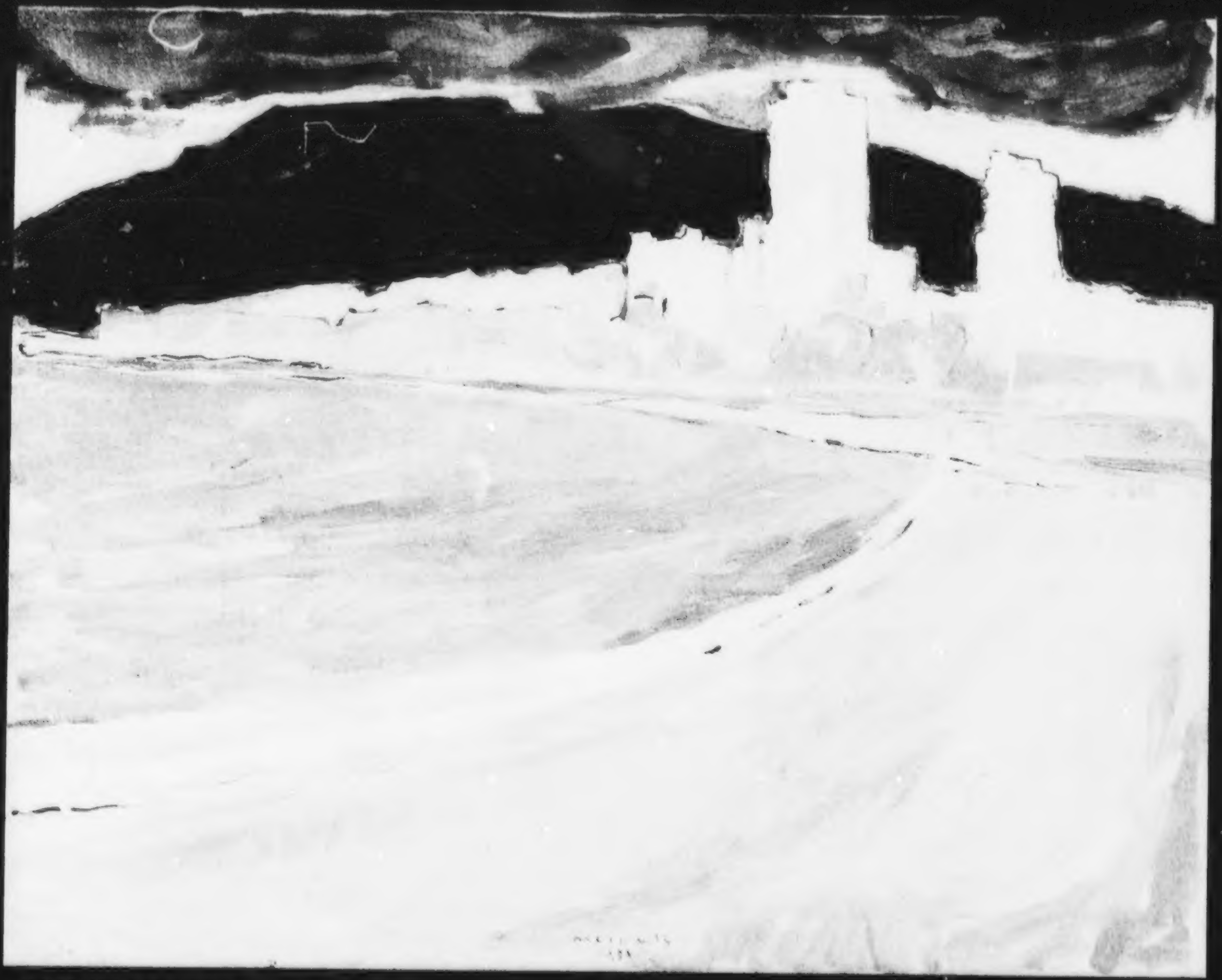

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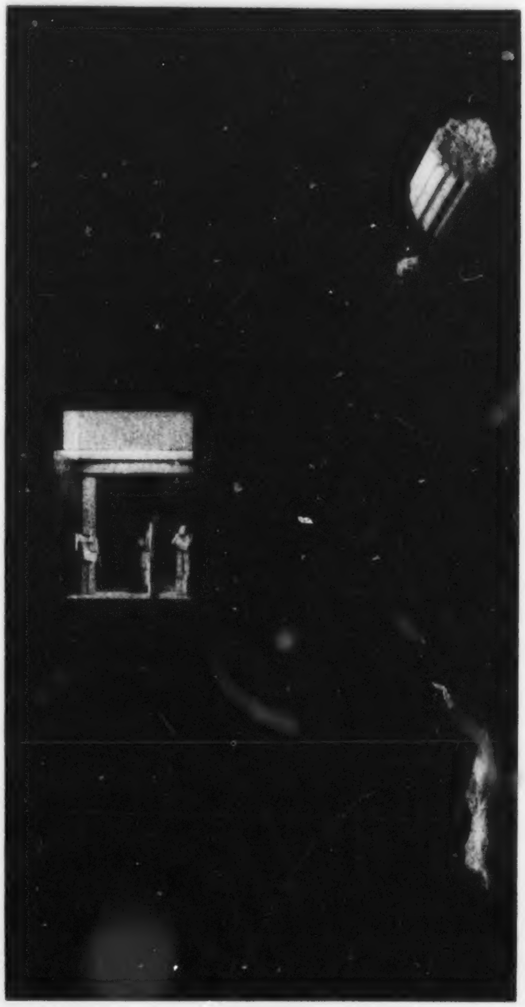
Detail of *Redifice* 1986
mixed media, holograms 20′ x 8′ x 30″



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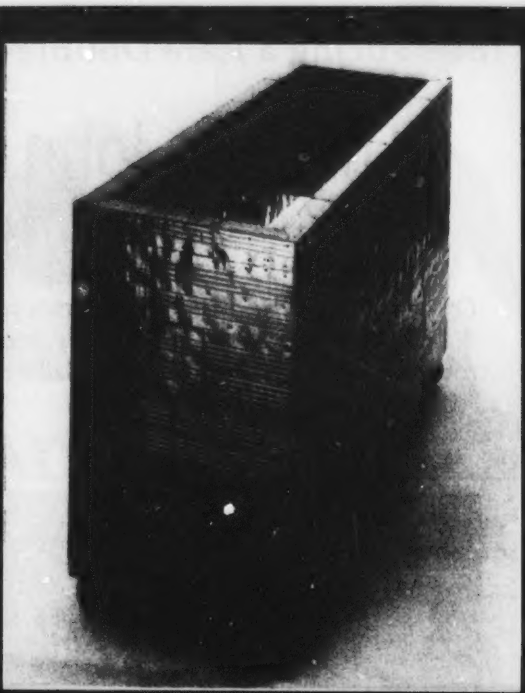

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1877 - 1917

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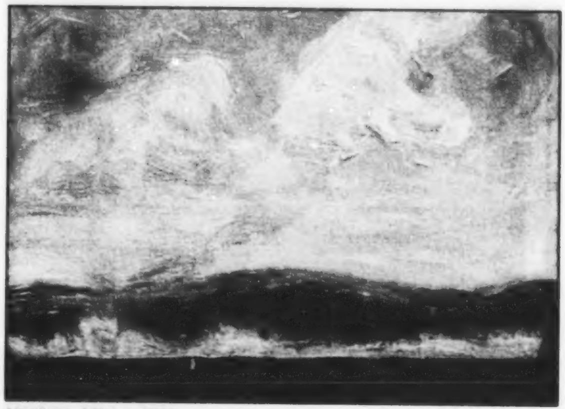

Northern Mist c. 1916 *8.5 X 10.5 ins.*

Estate stamp on each panel.

Spring Landscape with Snow c. 1917 *10.5 X 8.5 ins.*

Spring Landscape with Snow might be interpreted as Thomson's metaphor for the dawning of Canada in the modern era. Spring is coming to the dark land, and the overmantle of snow (expressed vigourously by the artist using heavy impasto) is in retreat. He is abstracting a universal idea about the new nation, which he expresses through his painting of Algonquin Park - the Northland.

David Mitchell

A.J. Casson, *member of the group of seven:* "The sky was like the sky in the Jack Pine. Thomson had been using an experimental style."

Paul Duval, *art critic and historian:* "I like it - It shows Thomson's movement towards the abstract.":

David Silcox, *Deputy Minister, Culture and Communications, Author of "Silence and the Storm"* "I feel it's right. A very nice painting."

The Financial Post, October 10, 1989

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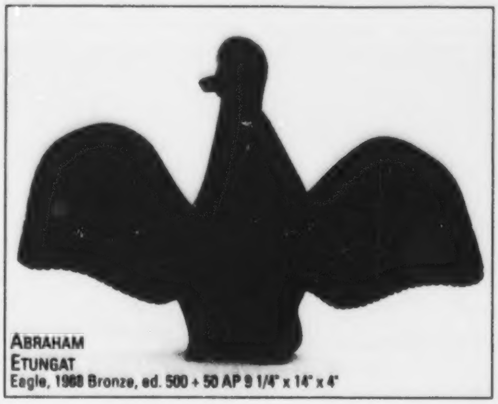
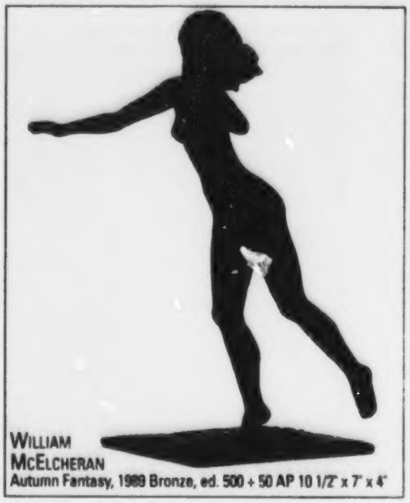


ABRAHAM
ETUNGAT
Eagle, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 9 1/4" x 14" x 4"



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Autumn Fantasy, 1989 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 10 1/2" x 7" x 4"

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Cairn, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 12" x 5" x 5 1/2"

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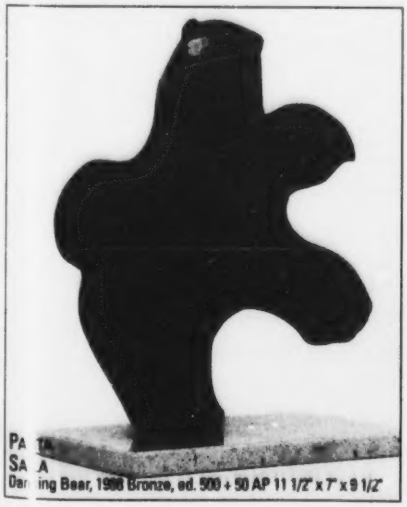

PA TA
SA A
Dancing Bear, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 11 1/2" x 7" x 9 1/2"

MICHAEL
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Wood Calling Bronze, 1988 Bronze, ed.500 + 50 AP 5" x 13" x 8 1/4"

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Bottom, 1988 Bronze, ed. 500 + 50 AP 9" x 7" x 8 1/2"

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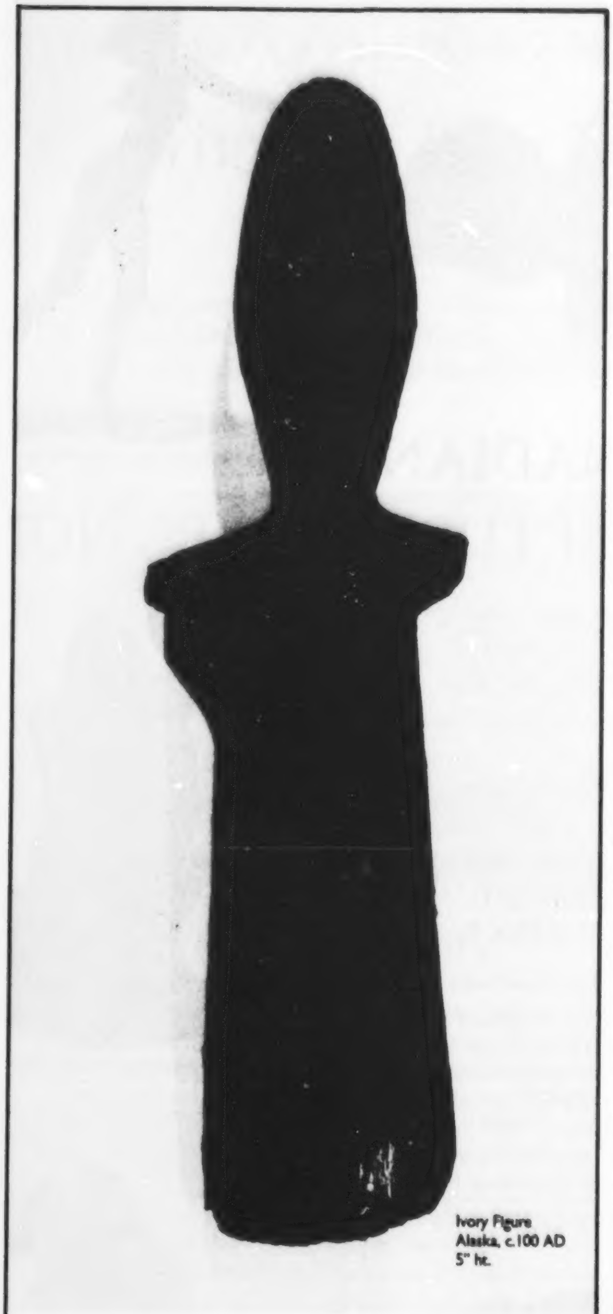

Ivory Figure
Alaska, c.100 AD
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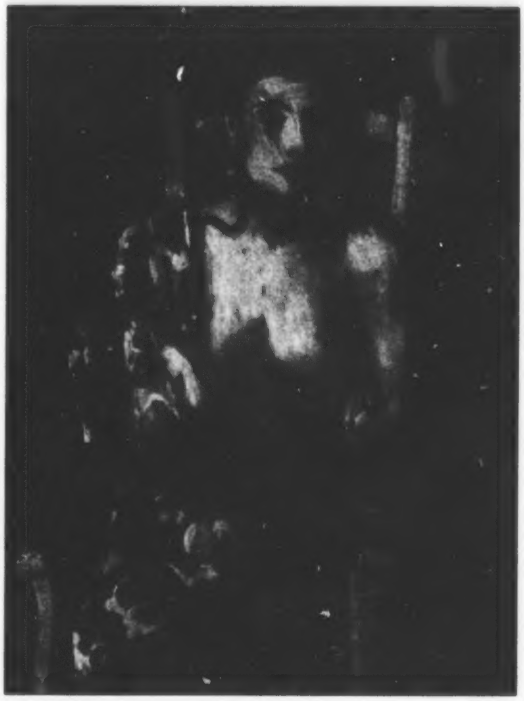

Jori Smith Seated Nude 1951

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Introduction by Sandra Gwyn
Critical Essay by Gerta Moray

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Art Frankfurt 1989 · Foto: Benjamin K

A CANADIAN ART PORTFOLIO

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH AN ASSIST

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW DANSON

The best photographic portraits are often those in which the photographer is particularly sensitive to the subject, eschewing any preconceived notions of what the picture — or the person — ought to look like. The end result could almost be termed a collaboration, however indirect, between the person behind the camera and the person in front of it. Toronto photographer Andrew Danson decided to take this idea of collaboration to its logical conclusion. In 1984, he arranged to photograph a number of politicians — but with a twist. Danson set up the mechanics of each photograph — the location, lighting and so forth — and then left the subject alone to press the shutter. The result was an elegant, entertaining and sometimes surprising series of shots, published as *Unofficial Portraits* in 1987.

We recently asked him to use the same technique with a handful of Canadian artists. Danson found the process involved even more shared decision-making where artists were concerned. "Politicians are always very busy," he says, "so I usually had to pick the place. But since artists are a lot more visually sensitive, I consulted with each subject quite closely about where and how they wanted to photograph themselves. I still left them totally alone, though, when it was time to take the picture." The results — and what they may or may not reveal about the artists concerned — you can see here.

MICHAEL SNOW

CHRISTOPHER PRATT

MARY PRATT

BETTY GOODWIN

TORONTO ARTS
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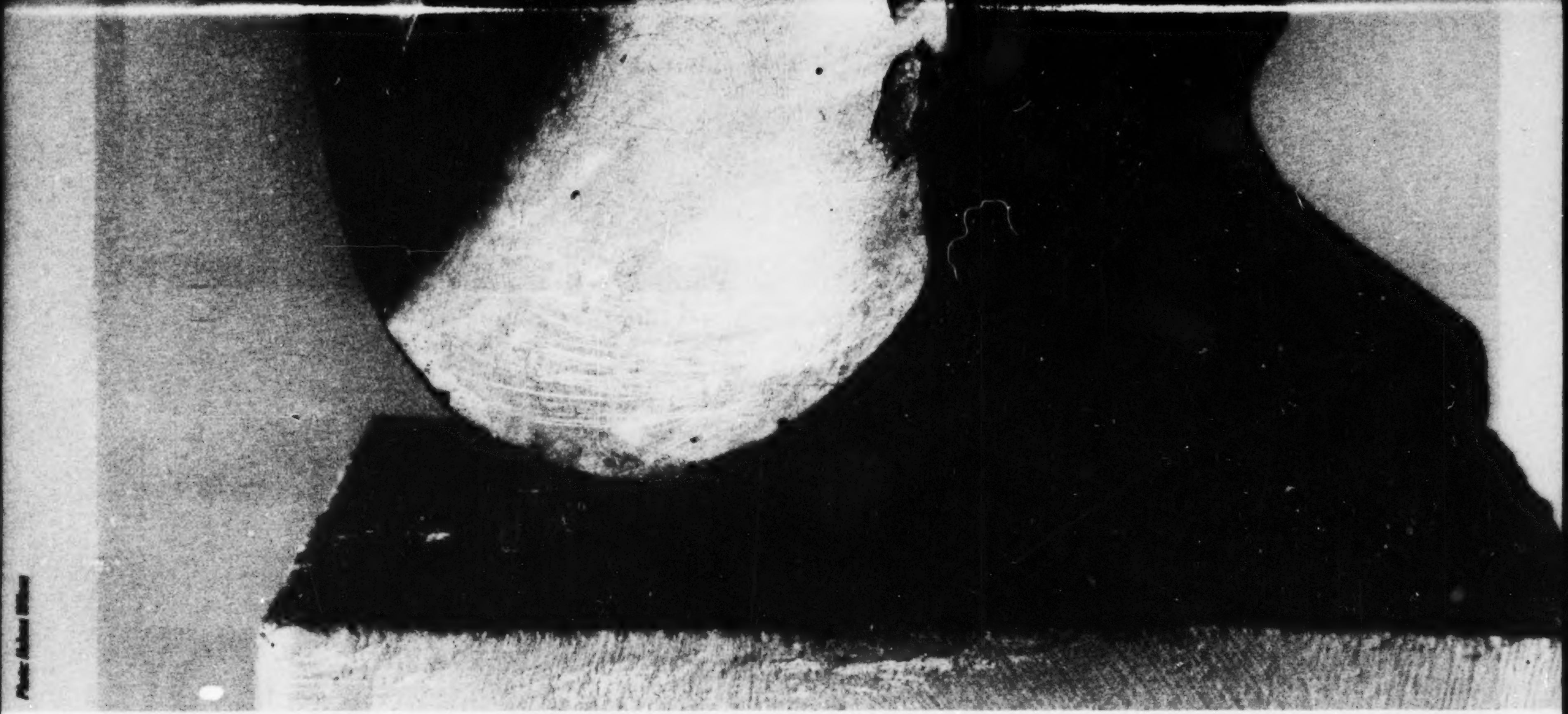
General Idea: Felix Partz, Jorge Zontal, A.A. Bronson



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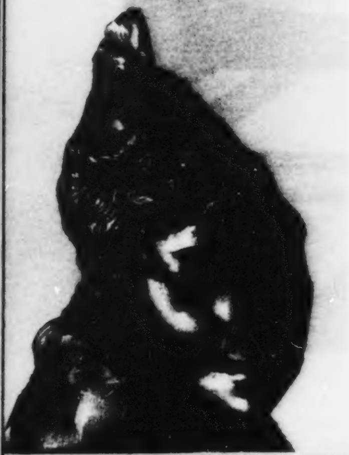
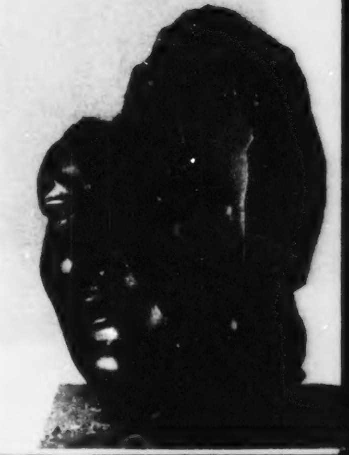


JIRI LADOCHA: INTERVENTIONS

Jiri Ladocha's work has involved, until recently, a near-obsession with pale, evacuated wall surfaces, rubbed and scraped and colored with powders until they recalled the time-burnished stucco façades of Venetian palazzi or the golden, plastered walls of Tuscan villas. His adding of cast plaster moldings to these architectural paintings has recently led to an interest in the employment of castings themselves. The new work, three examples of which are shown here, is about the critical ambiguities within any desecration of historical castings. By cutting into the plaster heads, Ladocha both produces a fetishized ruin, and at the same time, in his totting up of this "sum of destructions" (the phrase is Picasso's), recasts and re-enacts the history of the supreme modernist cut, the cut that produced Cubism and its fall-out of formal dislocations. GARY MICHAEL DAULT/*Three untitled works (1989); plaster cast, graphite; approximately 11 inches high by 8 inches diameter.*



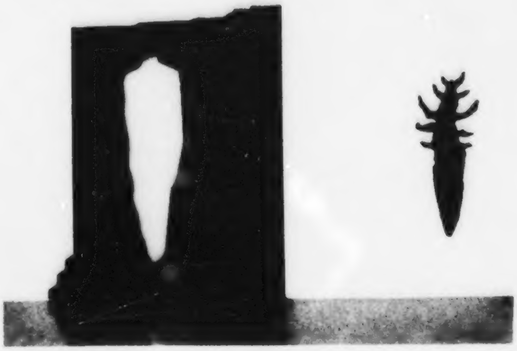
ENIGMATIC EMBLEMATIC

THE INTERNAL LOGIC OF JUDITH SCHWARZ'S SCULPTURE

Judith Schwarz was born in Vancouver, B.C., in 1944. After getting her B.A. at the University of British Columbia, she attended the Vancouver Art School. From there she went to York University where she received her M.F.A. in 1978. Thereafter she gained fairly immediate recognition, exhibiting in galleries such as Toronto's Isaacs Gallery and Mercer Union, and Powerhouse in Montreal, until the early '80s, when she joined the S.L. Simpson Gallery. It was during this period that I got to know Judith Schwarz and became familiar with her work.

In the summer of 1986 I was commissioned to write a catalogue essay on Schwarz for the Southern Alberta Art Gallery. Although I had followed her work for several years, the article necessitated a deeper look. I spent some time visiting her studio and listening to what she had to say about her sculpture. Using the information she had given me and studying photographs and slides of her work, I started to assemble as empirical an overview as possible on the sequence

BY CHRISTOPHER DEWDNEY PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN MASTROMONACO



The Rorschach 1987
African wood, steel
Left: 85 x 104 x 2 in.
Right: 23 x 58 x ⅜ in.
Photo: Peter MacCallum
All photos courtesy
S.L. Simpson Gallery

she was producing.

One afternoon, while I was working on the catalogue, describing the relation between a wall-mounted steel-plate silhouette and a structure on the floor, I began to discern an idiosyncratic consistency to the succession of her work. I realized that each sculpture arose not just spontaneously but logically from its predecessor. I also realized that the show she had mounted that year at the S.L. Simpson Gallery, *Shadow of the Palace*, contained four of the most important transformational phases of her work. Furthermore, this evolution was more than the synergy concomitant to the production of genuine art; it had a mind of its own, an odd, insistent and ultimately intriguing autonomy.

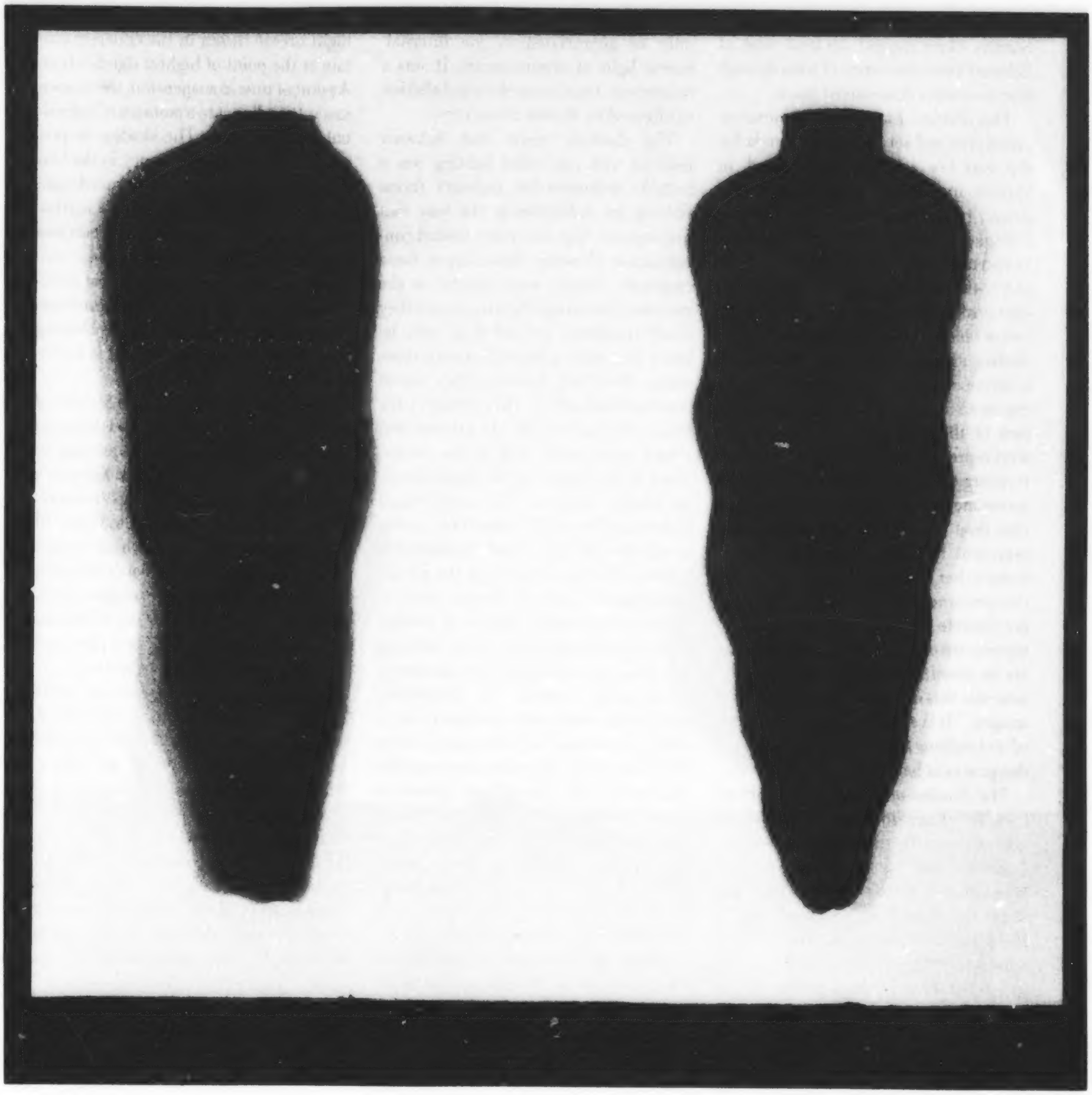
Shadow of the Palace was a dark and lusciously mysterious exhibition. It was mounted in a semi-darkened gallery with spotlights casting dramatic and sombre shadows on the floor. The installation, which centred on the moody radiance of its main work, *Shadow of the Palace*, had a thematic unity which was surprisingly uncompromised by the independence of its separate components. These elements were *Figure/Flame*, a tall, free-standing vaselike form; *Shadow Plates*, two wall-mounted steel-plate silhouettes evocative of torsos or amphorae; and *Shadow of the Palace*, consisting of a eight-foot steel-plate proscenium or lintel from which was draped a concrete curtain and in front of which was a bowl-like container resting on the floor.

These pieces spanned an evolutionary spectrum that started with *Figure/Flame* and ended with *Shadow Plates*. *Figure/Flame*, a tall, fluted sculpture, combined attributes of the contrary elements water and fire. Wavering flame-like ridges alternated around its sides with grooves that evoked water-eroded rivulets. *Figure/Flame*, although well within Schwarz's ambiguous phase, was more conventional than its successors. However, the work did instigate the next piece in the series.

Vernacular 1988
⅜-in. steel, European lacewood
17 x 94 x 2 in.
Photo: Isaac Applebaum

Schwarz was contemplating the finished *Figure/Flame* in her studio one evening when she tipped it over to look down into the hollow interior. She could see the ribs of the steel armature that supported the sculpture and at that moment had a revelatory insight into the nature of form, mass and substance that led immediately to her next works. The basin-shell component for *Shadow of the Palace*, which rested on the floor, had an almost mathematical armature, a logarithmic spiral reminiscent of the shells of molluscs. The concrete was applied so thinly over this armature that the metal showed through. This represented the second formal sculptural transformation of Schwarz's work: namely, the attempt to unite material and form in a complete economy of substance. This was the point of entry for her subsequent agenda of transcendental materiality, the aspiration of form and mass toward an immanent and ideal immateriality. Because the contours of form and substance were almost congruent, the basin was a virtual model of itself.

The *Shadow Plates* were simply Schwarz's reification of this phenomenon displaced onto the pictorial plane of the wall. The shadow onto which the enigmatic essence had been both mapped and condensed became itself an original object, the second-order derivative of a primary sculpture. To create these *Shadow Plates*, Schwarz removed their causal link to consensual reality. They became disturbing icons of the unconscious, totally free of the formative constraints of



Shadow Plates I & II 1986
⅝-in steel
2 x 6 ft. each
Photo: Isaac Applebaum

the world in which they now existed. The *Shadow Plates* marked the final stage of Schwarz's transformation of form through four successive dimensional states.

The *Shadow Plates* were themselves prototypes and set Schwarz's agenda for the next few years. They appeared, in various incarnations, in *Parallel Language* (1987), *The Rorschach* (1987), *Bilinguous* (1988) and *Eclipse* (1989). Constructed of three-eighth-inch steel plate, their surfaces were ground and chemically altered to an unpigmented matte black. Schwarz's concern for deflecting identification and categorization is active even on this micro-level, insisting on an absolute neutrality for the surface of these plates. For Schwarz, the steel represents the density of the image, its energy. These plates, in all their indeterminate manifestations, are silhouettes that float on the pictorial plane. They represent the closest Schwarz has yet come to her ideal of congruence between the container and the contained. These are discrete objects which, because they equivocate on the verge of identity, radiate an unsettling energy. Schwarz characterizes this quality as one of "receding images." It is this precise quality, a sort of crystalline ambiguity, that Schwarz designates as having absolute priority.

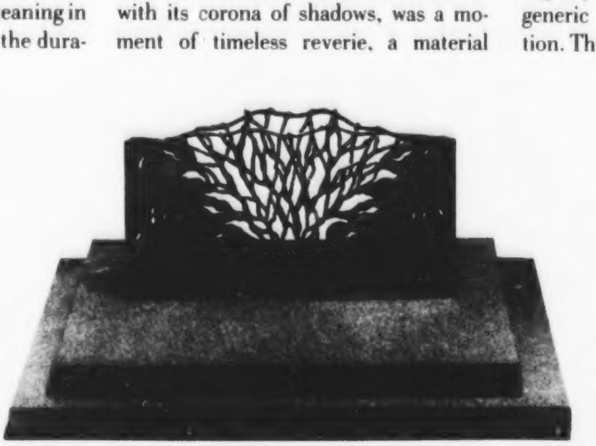
The *Shadow of the Palace* exhibition, itself receding into time, becomes a conceptual locus for this dialogue with reference and perception precisely because it is in the past. In a certain sense the show becomes more vital in the historical continuum than when it appeared. The exhibition did have an intense, almost rigorous patina of nostalgia to it. What was significant about the *Shadow of the Palace* show was that it was designed to discharge its meaning in a temporality not enclosed by the duration of the exhibition. Its richness could only be appreciated in the internal, noetic light of reminiscence. It was a mnemonic, time-anomolous installation configured by its own historicity.

The shadowy realm that Schwarz induced with controlled lighting was a suitable ambience for inchoate forms striving for definition in the way that unconscious impulses yearn toward consciousness. However, these shapes, these enigmatic objects, were arrested at the moment prior to signification before they could transform beyond their own latency. Steeped in a somnolent aura, these works disturbed because they never resolved themselves. They lurked at the limen of consciousness like a dream that eludes articulation. Just as the proscenium of the *Shadow of the Palace* synecdochically conjured the architectural presence of the whole palace of Knossos, so was the exhibition itself a synecdochic tableau of items referring to the phenomenological drama of human memory beyond this intimate theatre of shadow. This rigorous ambiguity, never allowing any form to coalesce into any associative relationship, charged the installation with a dreamlike quality because it was in effect isomorphic with the mechanisms of dream work, of sublimation and displacement. Its secondary animation came from the double mnemonic charge that was enacted by the show itself becoming a memory in the observer. That is to say, it was as if the exhibition could be more tactually experienced, could become more tangible, if one took a phantom walk through the installation in the mind's eye, in the diffuse light of the nostalgia for mass.

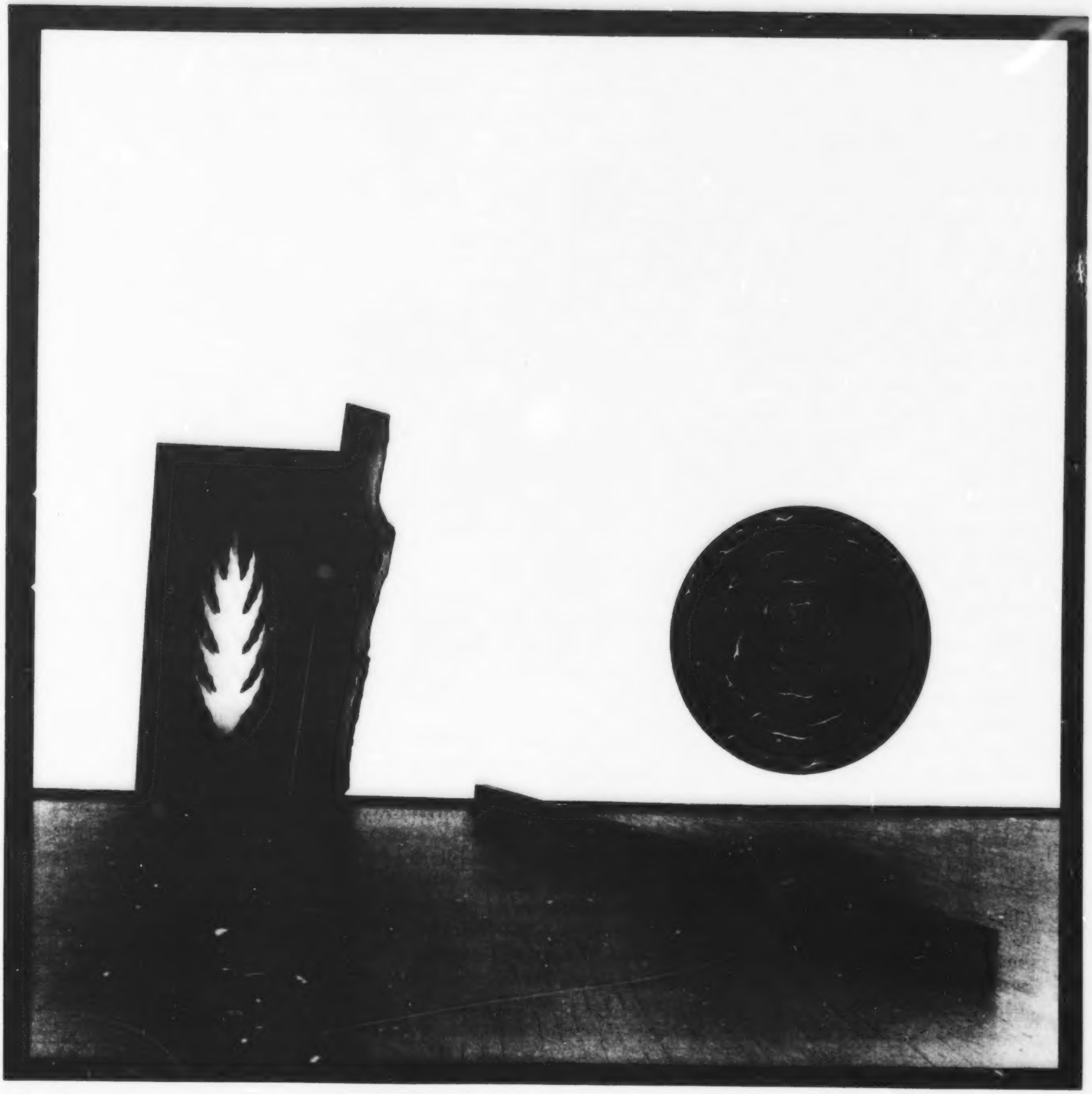
The title piece, *Shadow of the Palace*, with its corona of shadows, was a moment of timeless reverie, a material record of an invisible, transitory event, a night breeze frozen in the concrete curtain at the point of highest signification. A point of time in suspension, the unseen instant as adjunct to a moment of individual consciousness. The shadow as presentiment, as aura of memory, as the hinterland of presence, the synecdochic arch being the ruined lintel of a mythopoeic colossus. The concrete curtain was twilight, as the gallery was bathed in twilight like the intangibility of a lost civilization, the feel of a prior age, the archaeology of personal consciousness blowing in some anamnetic breeze that is necessarily nocturnal.

The themes set forth in the *Shadow of the Palace* installation are still elaborating themselves, and its oddly disquieting atmosphere seems to linger in Schwarz's recent work. The wavering vase/torso silhouettes, the relation of wall to floor and her exacting ambiguity have all continued. However, some new motifs have also arisen, like the somewhat malign protocreatures in *The Rorschach* and *Bilinguous* and the juxtaposition of steel plate and wood in most of her recent works.

In 1987 Schwarz executed two works that continued the theme of related, semi-autonomous objects she initiated with the work *Shadow of the Palace*. These two were *Parallel Language* and *The Rorschach*. *Parallel Language* consisted of three elements: a large, wall-mounted steel-plate disc with vermicular incisions, a long steel beam resting on the floor in front of the work and a cut-out steel plate and oak board leaning against the wall. The disc realizes what Schwarz calls "a complete internal system," which is to say, dynamic forms with a vaguely organic reference that possess a generic and prototypical characterization. There is an ascribed energy to these



La porte de l'arbre 1986
1:50 scale model for proposal for a human rights monument in Ottawa
Photo: Peter MacCallum



Parallel Language 1987
Oak, steel
20 ¾ x 10 x 13 ¾ ft.
Photo: Isaac Applebaum

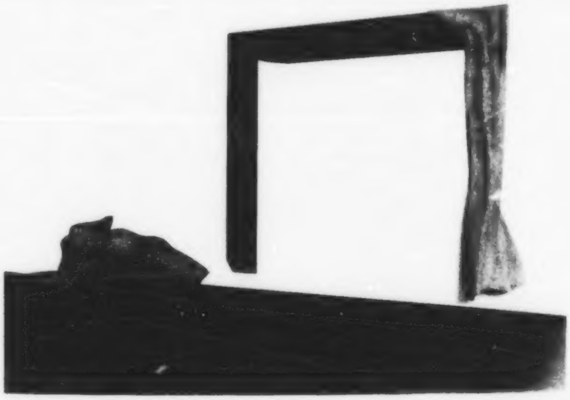
stria that attempts to mediate an implosive and explosive force. The steel beam, definitively minimalist, serves to reconcile and intersect the other two elements in *Parallel Language*. It also, because it is grounded, serves to locate the work in a three-dimensional continuum. The wall, for Schwarz, has always been an ironic, pictorial space the function of which is illusionary. The steel plate with its quasi-organic flamelike icon of ambiguity leans against the wall yet rests on the floor, again mediating two parallel but incongruous cultural realms. Also there is a dynamic quality to the steel template cutout, its form meant to create the sensation of movement. For Schwarz, the explicit parallels are memory to physicality, floor to wall and organic to artificial.

The Rorschach was composed of two elements: a tall steel sheet with a shadow plate cut out at the centre and a margin of African wood at one side, and a smaller, wall-mounted root/animal template to its right. The large steel-plate rectangle echoed the architectural reference of *Shadow of the Palace* but had some important variations. The cut-out shape in the centre is clearly bifurcated down its central axis. One side is undulating and leaflike while the other is angular and stiff. This duality extends throughout this element of *The Rorschach*. There are steplike shapes at the base of the rectangle and yet the top of the rectangle is meant to evoke a landscape topography. On the viewer's right, however, is an exceedingly curious little item, a sort of rootlike animunculus. In its own way this element anticipates the slightly demonic form of *Bilinguous*. It is a potent shape in its elicitation of an emotional response in the viewer and as such is exceptional for Schwarz in that it is entirely configured by affect. She invested a large amount of her personal dilemma in this figure, seeing it as "what it meant to be female and to define one's own cultural identity." It is important not to see this glyph as symbolic, however, because her work is much more intercessional than that. It simply mediates or provides a point of reference, much the way that a communications satellite expedites communication.

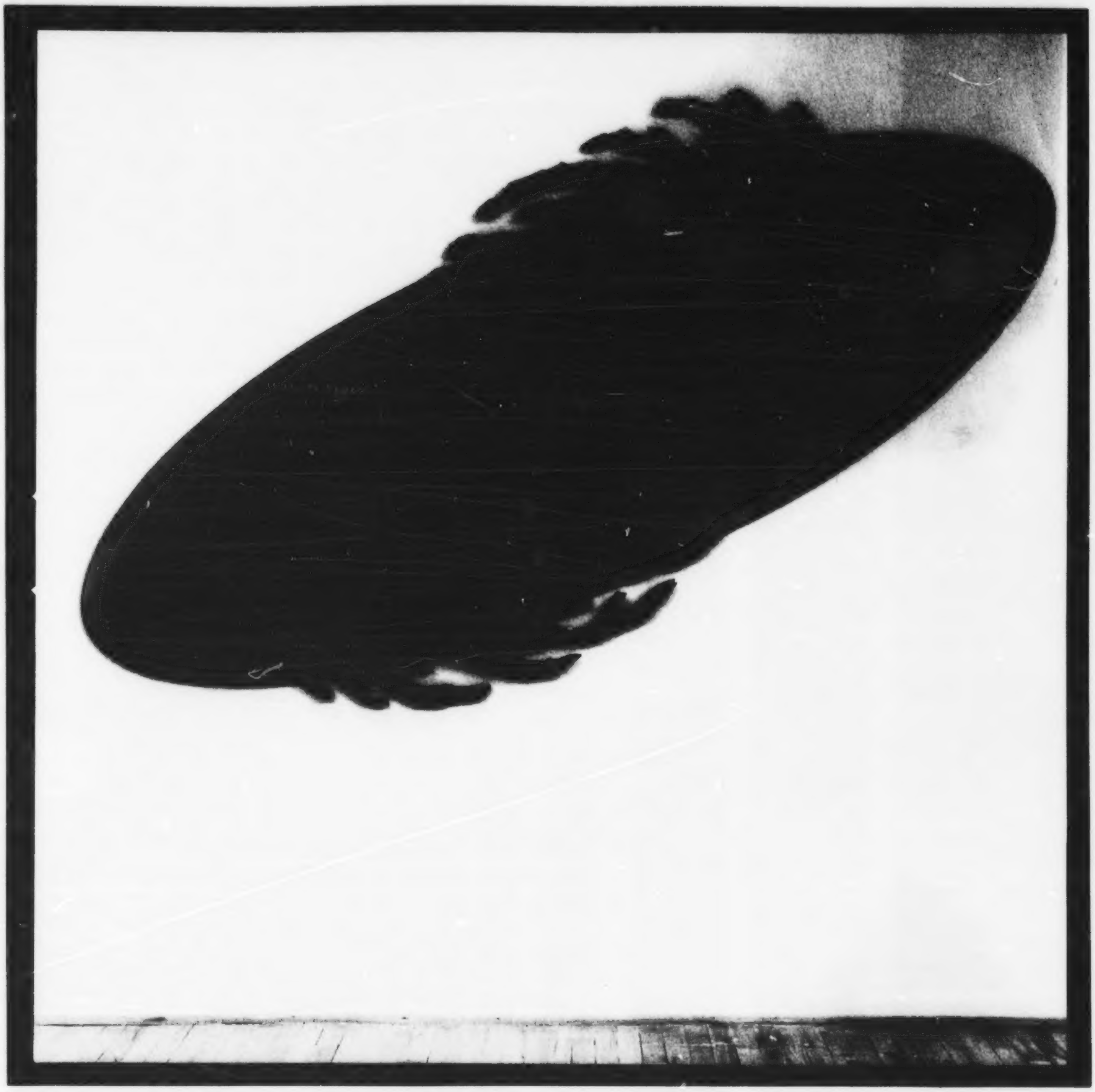
In 1988 Schwarz refined and elaborated on this theme and produced *Bilinguous*, a very odd, slightly repulsive animunculus. It had a disturbing quadrilateral symmetry and an almost diabolical animated dynamism. It was sinister without, somehow, being aggressive. It was double resonance between the notion of two languages and the culture/nature split that increasingly preoccupies Schwarz. This perceived schism arises in one of her most recent works, *Eclipse* (1989). However, the posited dialectic between the natural and the artificial is spanned more seamlessly. *Eclipse* consists of two juxtaposed elements, a spiral galactic shape superimposed on an ellipse of plywood. *Eclipse* is a very iconic, strong work with what appears to be a design gloss but which is a result of Schwarz's intensive and reductive labor. It is an extremely balanced work the poise of which is derived from the parity of active and quiescent energies, of negative and positive. The nebulaic shape again exhibits the morphic ambiguity that Schwarz contrives but this time on two levels: reference and dynamism.

Recently Schwarz has produced a series of maquettes. They are formal distillations of her sculptural concerns and translate themselves easily into monumental dimensions. Among the maquettes are her proposal for the human rights monument in Ottawa and her presentations for Canada Place, the Zeidler building in Vancouver. Her human rights tribute, entitled *La porte de l'arbre*, consists of an elongated rectangular plane, delineated and elevated by ascending tiers of low steps. This grassy piazza would be dominated at one end by a series of cypress-like pyramidal English oak trees and at the other by a wide upright rectangle whose middle section is a screenlike lattice of organic shapes. The central, latticed portion of the wall has been cleaved into two layers that converge conically onto the gate itself. Her model for Vancouver, which Schwarz calls *Pacificus*, consists of two elements. One is a standing rectangular plate with the cut-out silhouette of a fish/amphora in it. The other is a recumbent shape reminiscent of a soft nautilus. While these proposals bespeak a new direction in Schwarz's work, she also continues to elaborate the three-dimensional narrative which her indoor sculptures represent.

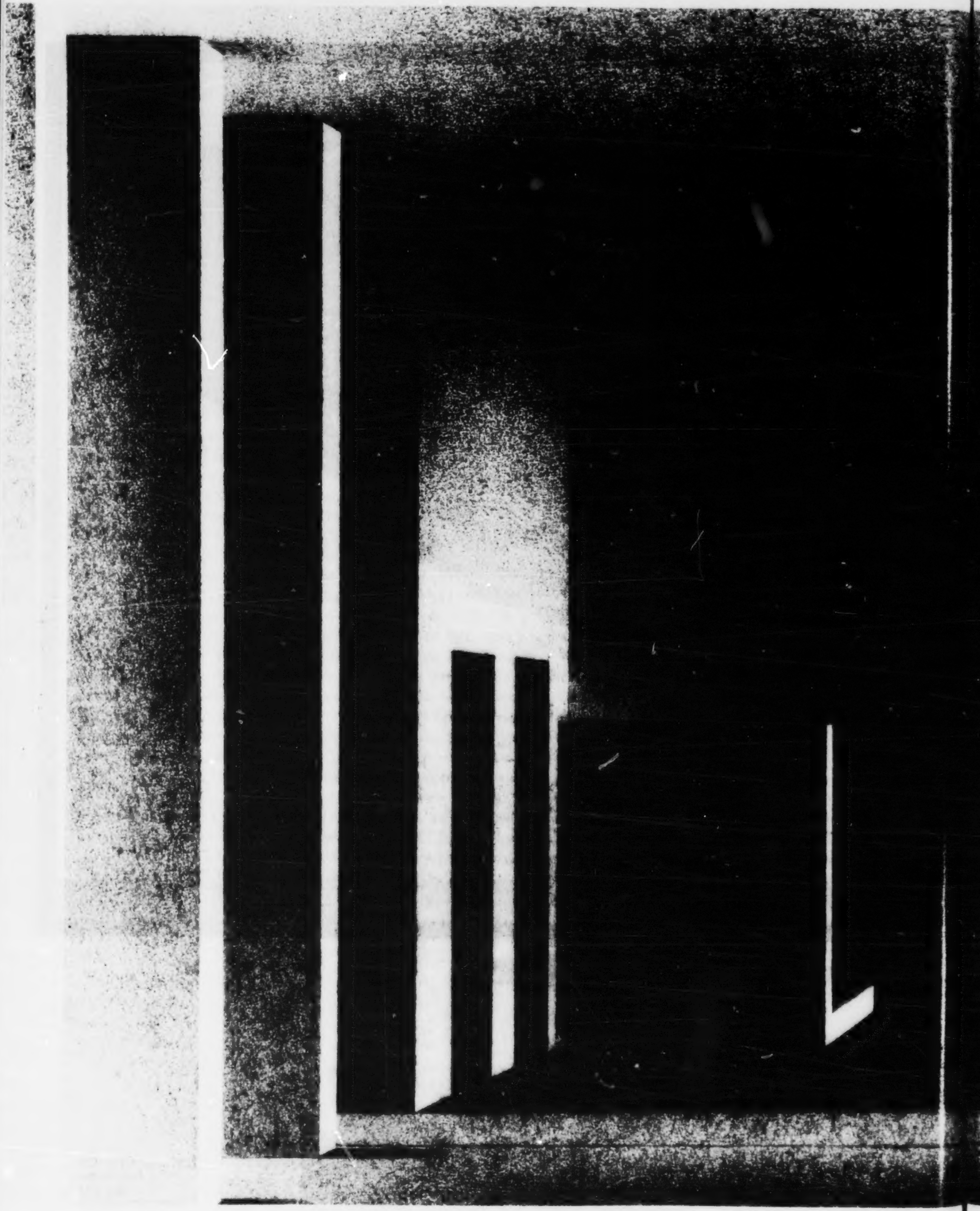
Schwarz's sculptures are heuristic armatures of an underlying order that is purely noetic. Each successive work, particularly the wood and steel-plate works, is consistent with an internal logic. This reality is immaterial, universal within the terms of Schwarz's subjective praxis, and seems to be the progressive exploration of an implicate structure. These works are complexities generated by a handful of variables. Most importantly they are anti-ontological devices the sole purpose of which is to restlessly subvert the process of perceiving them, categorically or in any way other than a direct, pre-verbal apprehension.



Shadow of the Palace 1986
Concrete, steel
13 ½ x 9 ½ x 8 ft.
Photo: Isaac Applebaum



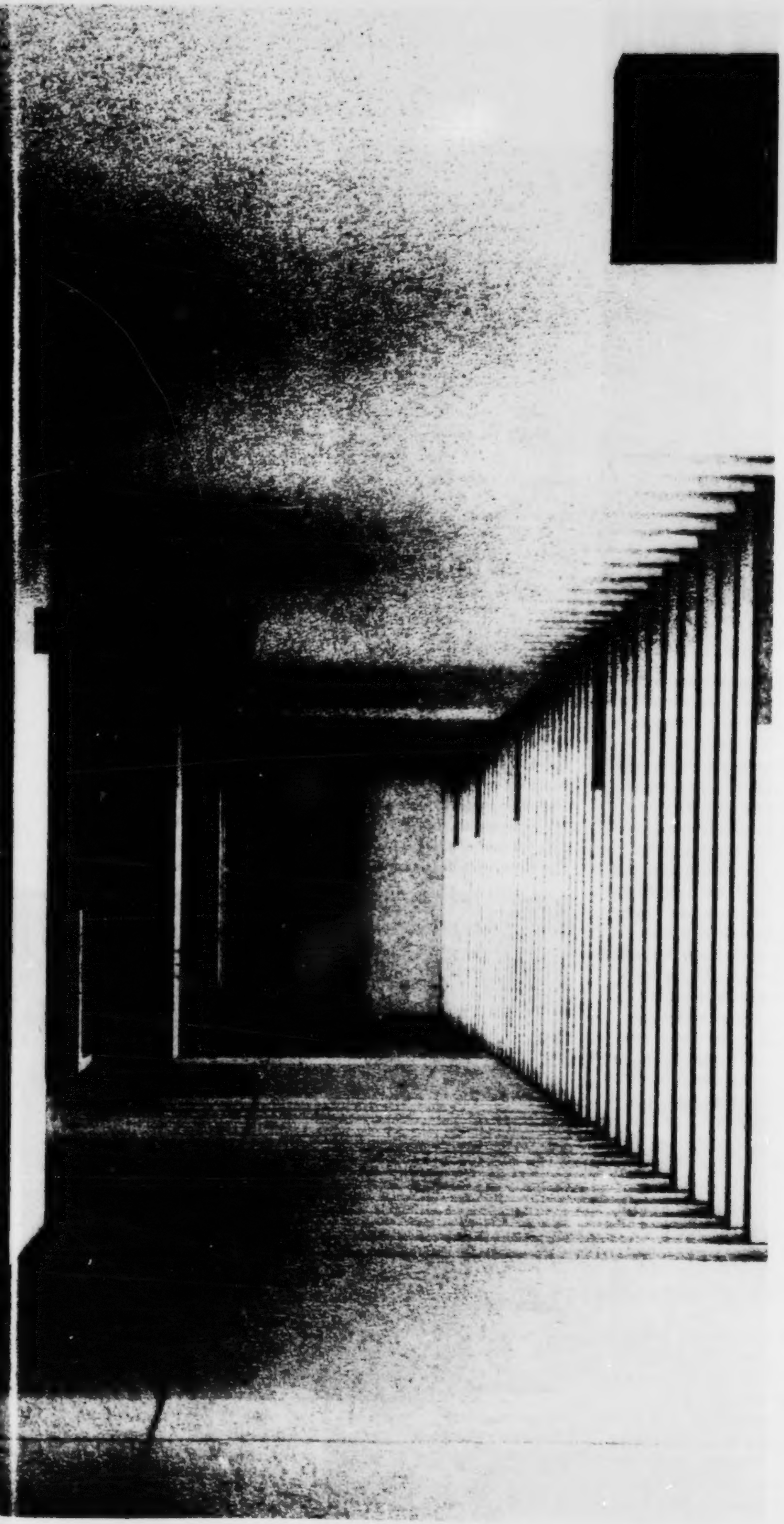
Eclipse 1989
Plywood, steel
98 x 48 in.
Photo: Isaac Applebaum



SPATIAL DELIVERY

THE ARCHITECTURAL DISCOURSE OF MARGARET PRIEST

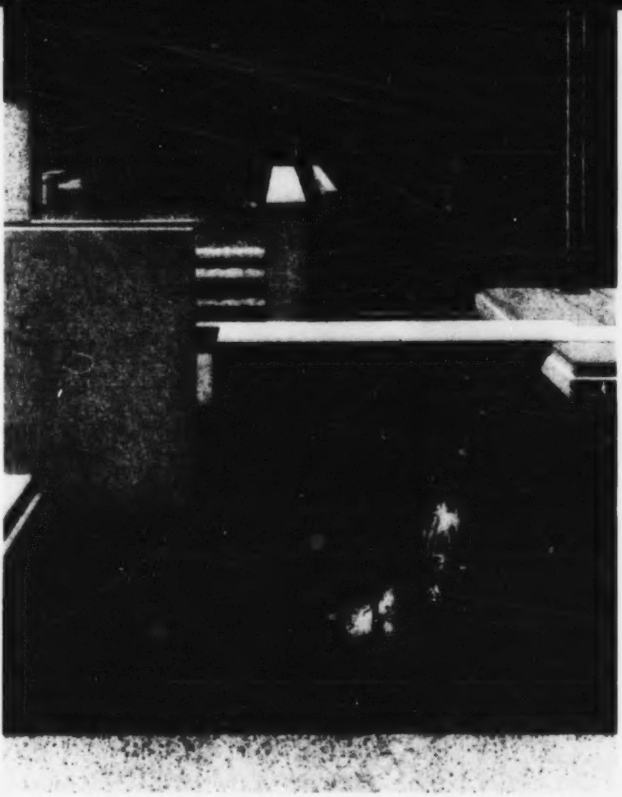
BY GARY MICHAEL DAULT



Margaret Priest's drawings are so imbued with the problems of contemporary architecture and so tinctured with its discourse that the viewer might be forgiven for supposing that Priest was indeed a practising architect — one who just happened to make exquisitely realized renderings of architectural issues that took her interest. She is, in fact, not an architect but rather an artist with an absorbing critical and phenomenological stake in what architecture is and what, as a result, we — as architecturally bounded beings — have become.

Priest, who was born and raised in England, studied at London's Royal College of Art during the late 1960s, just when what we came to know as Conceptual Art began to investigate the perceptual underpinnings of the Pop Art world in which she had come to intellectual maturity. It is perhaps too pat, too convenient, but tempting nevertheless, to suggest that the thingness of her art, its resolute palpability, is traceable to the Pop-generated environment of her student years, while the crit-

The Hospital 1989
Pencil on handmade paper
11 x 8 in.
Photo: Jeff Nolte

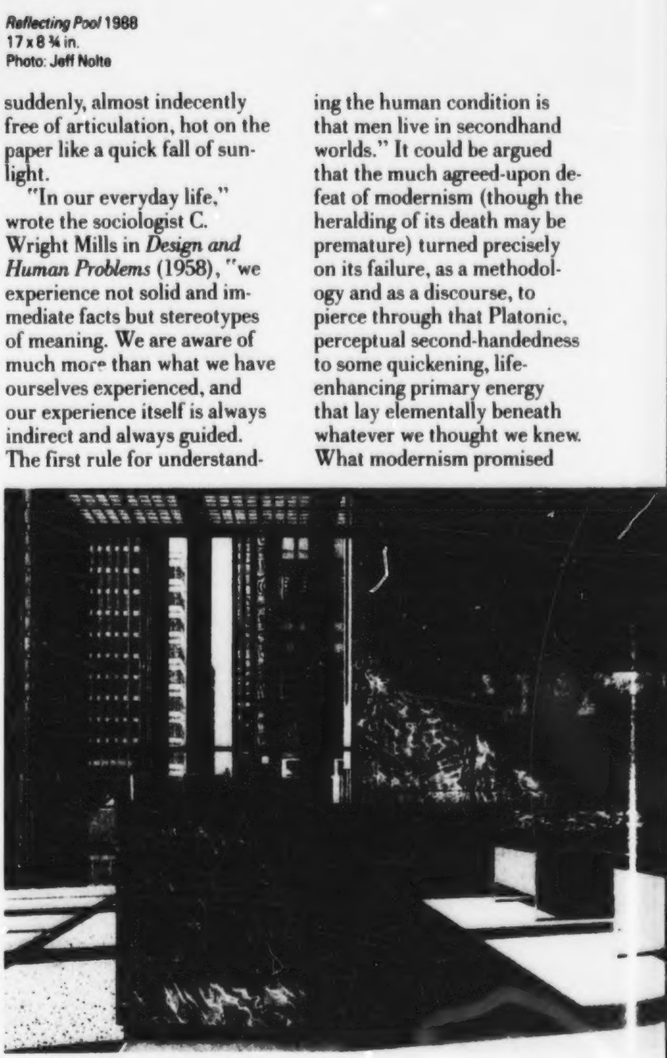


Reflecting Pool 1988
17 x 8 ¾ in.
Photo: Jeff Nolte

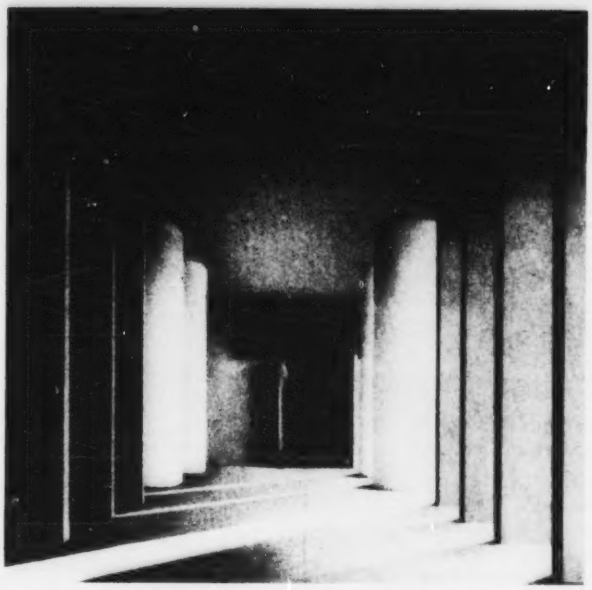
ical, exploratory, open-ended problem-solving and solution-positing that animates it may have come channelling through her early exposure to Conceptualism's epistemological ambitiousness. Priest took up residence in Toronto in 1976, where she has been teaching (at the University of Toronto's School of Architecture, for the most part) and making the extraordinary drawings and prints that, taken together, shape the nature of her concerns as an artist.

Her drawings, which are very small (most are no more than 8 by 10 inches), present a reading of some architecturally related view, some spatial sample of a built — usually modernist — environment. They are pencil drawings, made with a labor-intensive concentration (each drawing takes a month or more to complete) that in no way diminishes or curtails their essential graphic buoyancy, the pencil's granular touch having swarmed into cloud-chambers of pointilliste light counterpointed, invariably, by spongy, absorptive planes of spun shadow and elastic void. Each drawing is a calculus of brilliantly controlled blacks, greys and whites. The whites are sometimes made of the bareness of paper, whites that are suddenly, almost indecently free of articulation, hot on the paper like a quick fall of sunlight.

"In our everyday life," wrote the sociologist C. Wright Mills in *Design and Human Problems* (1958), "we experience not solid and immediate facts but stereotypes of meaning. We are aware of much more than what we have ourselves experienced, and our experience itself is always indirect and always guided. The first rule for understanding the human condition is that men live in secondhand worlds." It could be argued that the much agreed-upon defeat of modernism (though the heralding of its death may be premature) turned precisely on its failure, as a methodology and as a discourse, to pierce through that Platonic, perceptual second-handedness to some quickening, life-enhancing primary energy that lay elementally beneath whatever we thought we knew. What modernism promised



The Debt Palace 1989
Pencil on Strathmore paper
6 x 7 ½ in.
Photo: Jeff Nolte
Collection: Ontario Architectural Association

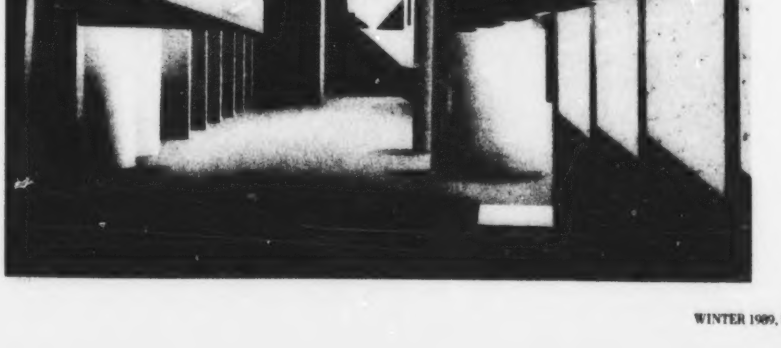


The Museum 1989
Pencil on handmade paper
7 ¾ x 7 ¾ in.
Photo: Jeff Nolte

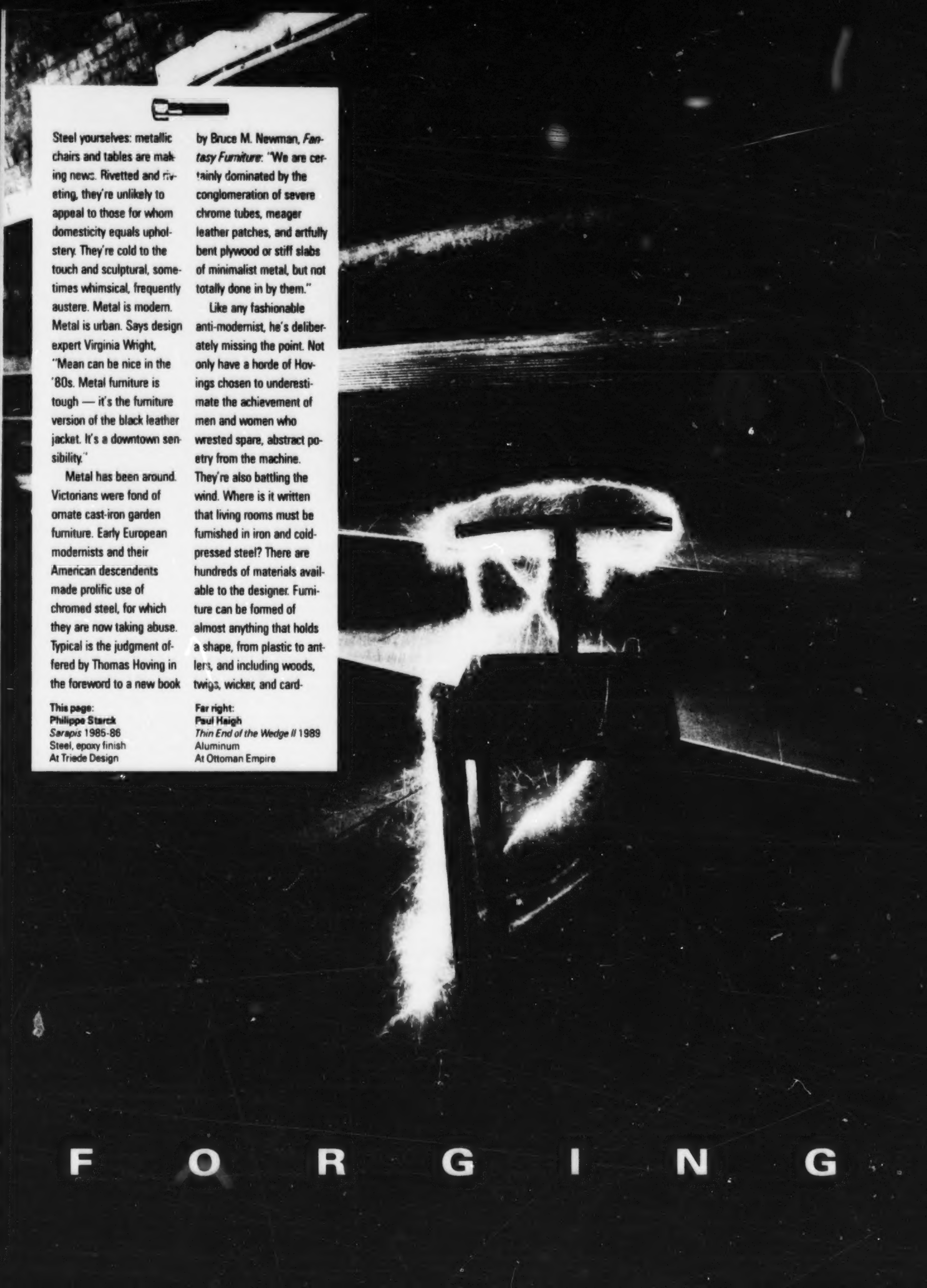
was is-ness, a breakthrough to the bedrock of perception. What makes Margaret Priest's drawings so oddly mysterious (it is odd, in the first place, that any drawing so open and so fully declared could generate mystery at all) and so moving is that they retrace the tenets of modernism — architectural modernism — in an essentially physiological way ("In the coming biotechnic age," wrote Richard J. Neutra in 1955, "...criteria to judge design will generally have to be of a well-informed physiological nature"), rebuilding the structures of modernism, reinvesting them with lightfall, reinhabiting their spaces within the painstakingly molecular movement of her pragmatic, experiencing pencil.

Most of Priest's drawings have their source in photographic reproductions of existing buildings. Her drawings *The Hospital* (1989) and *The Prison* (1989), both from her current *Immurement* series, are derived, for example, from photographs of Aldo Rossi's *Unità residenziale al quartiere Gallaratese a Milano* (1970; Residential unit in the Gallaratese area of Milan). The differences between her drawings and the black-and-white reproductions of passages from Rossi's residential complex are almost subliminally delicate and take a lot of looking to discern. There are some obvious differences, of course. Priest's substituting conventional port-holed hospital doors end-stopping a corridor, which, in the Rossi building, fades to a black infinity, provides an unusually concrete moment of witty anguish. More typical is her rendering even more spatially ambiguous Rossi's *Arcade seen from the upper floor*, resulting in a horrifying constructivist agoraphobia that links her no-exit/multi-exit *Prison* with that architectural delirium, the *Prisons* of Piranesi.

Priest's drawings can be, as *The Hospital* and *The Prison* are, directly critical — socially critical. But that didacticism is invariably only one element in the work's overall meaning. More important is the materiality of the drawings, their life as a laboratory for the dismantling of the modernist environment and the living-through of how a structure performs. And how that performance touches us all. Linguistically, Priest's drawings are essays — assailings of architectural meaning, graphic assumptions of spatial knowledge, attempts upon the life of structures. It is understandable, perhaps, given the pearlescent graphite patina of her drawings, that they are sometimes taken for hedonistic homages to the very discipline they deconstruct. But this is no urban pastoral. Priest's drawings are ferocious investigations, an art brutality becoming what it has beheld and wearing itself out with grandeur, smashing modernist idealism flat with the paradoxical hammer of its own perfection.



The Prison 1989
Pencil on handmade paper
11 ⅛ x 7 ⅞ in.
Photo: Jeff Nolte



Steel yourselves: metallic chairs and tables are making news. Rivetted and riveting, they're unlikely to appeal to those for whom domesticity equals upholstery. They're cold to the touch and sculptural, sometimes whimsical, frequently austere. Metal is modern. Metal is urban. Says design expert Virginia Wright, "Mean can be nice in the '80s. Metal furniture is tough — it's the furniture version of the black leather jacket. It's a downtown sensibility."

Metal has been around. Victorians were fond of ornate cast-iron garden furniture. Early European modernists and their American descendents made prolific use of chromed steel, for which they are now taking abuse. Typical is the judgment offered by Thomas Hoving in the foreword to a new book by Bruce M. Newman, *Fantasy Furniture*: "We are certainly dominated by the conglomeration of severe chrome tubes, meager leather patches, and artfully bent plywood or stiff slabs of minimalist metal, but not totally done in by them."

Like any fashionable anti-modernist, he's deliberately missing the point. Not only have a horde of Hovings chosen to underestimate the achievement of men and women who wrested spare, abstract poetry from the machine. They're also battling the wind. Where is it written that living rooms must be furnished in iron and cold-pressed steel? There are hundreds of materials available to the designer. Furniture can be formed of almost anything that holds a shape, from plastic to antlers, and including woods, twigs, wicker, and card-

This page:
Philippe Starck
Sarapis 1985-86
Steel, epoxy finish
At Triede Design

Far right:
Paul Haigh
Thin End of the Wedge II 1989
Aluminum
At Ottoman Empire

FORGING

CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE SHOWS ITS METAL

BY ADELE FREEDMAN/PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN KELLY

AHEAD

board; foam chips and cart wheels; felt, leather and papier-mâché. To each its sensibility and possibilities. So it is with metals. They bend to the will of the designer. These are eclectic times. Take your choice.

And what a choice there is! A meshed stainless-steel armchair and sofa by Shiro Kuramata, master of the skeletal and shiny, which have been emptied of matter, their shimmering surfaces left to dazzle and decorate. From England, seats fashioned from old cutlery — knives, forks, spoons, ladles; and with intentional striving for shock and brute ugliness, furniture assembled from rusting hunks of scrap metal. French superstar Philippe Starck, whose signature is glamor, conceived a padded Deco club chair as a naked aluminum shell: his steel bar stools, born of a different mood, have light-catching gridded seats and horn-shaped foot rests. Borek Sipek, formerly of Prague, now based in London, transformed the common bridge chair into a folding apparition with a ripple-edged copper seat and a frilled brass backrest. There are no limits. Less can still be more.

A Canadian success story is Gazelle, a graceful café chair of bent and welded metal designed by Jonathan Crinion for Area, the Toronto designers and manufacturers. Ten thousand Gazelles have been sold since the chair was introduced in November 1987. Says Area co-founder, Tom Deacon, himself a designer, "Metal suits the medium-scale production we're involved with, and it's something I have an affinity for. Maybe it's my modernist leanings. I

This page:
Donald McKay
Paper Airplane 1989
Steel, epoxy finish
At Donald McKay & Co.

Far right:
Shiro Kuramata
How High the Moon 1986-87
Stainless steel mesh
At Nienkamper

find chrome a little cool and corporate, but epoxy finishes warm it up — we use them on the Gazelle. And metal lends itself to clear expression of form. When you're working with tubes, bars and rods, a lot of the form comes from manipulating the metal. There's a kind of simplicity that happens when you work with metal. Wood doesn't preclude that, but metal suggests it."

Metal also suggested something to Donald McKay. The Toronto designer has just gone public with Paper Airplane, a sturdy, movable, steel utility table he describes as a "a simple robot." Simple because it isn't powered. Robot because it fetishizes its operating characteristics, mechanisms, and manner of production. "It's made the way some guy would make a table for himself in the shop," says McKay. "The idea was to take a fundamental form of production and make something lyrical with it."

Both ordinary and precious, suitable for home or warehouse, Paper Airplane is long, low, sleek — and shaped like guess what. Most of its parts, such as the urethane wheels, are fabricated in standard shop fashion. But the machinery and hardware are custom-made. "I used to work in wood," says McKay. "I moved over to metal for reasons of durability and finish, and because I could predict the outcome of a work more precisely. Also, we have an attachment to a certain industrial background." McKay cites the aviation industry of 30 years ago as an inspiration, but many different roads lead to metal. This is a story that has no finish.

This page:
Jonathan Crinion
Gazelle 1986-87
Steel, epoxy finish
At Area and Umbra

Far right:
Borek Sipek
Anebo Tak 1986-87
Steel, brass, paint, anti-oxidant
At Triede Design

Deal Her In

Montreal's Brenda Wallace Opens Her First Gallery

"Sure it's a big change," Brenda Wallace is saying in her new Montreal gallery, when suddenly there is a loud thud and a small shower of clay falls from the frame of a work by Ron Benner. It's the fur-cutting business next door thwacking some skins on the other side of the wall. Just then the phone rings, and it's another wrong number; Wallace's new listing is one digit away from the Air Canada reservations number, which means half the calls are turning Wallace into a travel agent.

She sighs, and grumbles about Ma Bell, but Brenda Wallace seems happy — if a little apprehensive — about opening her new gallery in Montreal. "I've been wanting to do this for years," she says, "but I've never had the financial resources. But then I said, 'You'll never have them, so why not go ahead?' "

So here she is, back in her home town after an absence of nearly 40 years and a varied career that has included just about every kind of visual art activity. During her life, Wallace has been a full-time multimedia artist, head of the English education services at the National Gallery, arts officer at the Canada Council, exhibition director for New York's Institute for Art and Urban Resources (which operates The Clocktower and PS1), director of the London Regional Art Gallery, and, until recently, head of the Art Studio program at the Banff Centre.

She was in Banff for three years, and although she thinks it's a wonderful place for artists, "I felt I was out of the mainstream. There was something unnerving about watching people come and go, while you always stayed put. It was time to move on." Now, at 59, she has taken what is the biggest challenge of her career, and is determined to stay in it for the long haul.

Wallace's new gallery is in a choice location, on the fifth floor in the same factory-studio building on St. Catherine West as the galleries of René Blouin and Chantal Boulanger, who are just down the hall. A block away is the site of the new building for the Musée d'art contemporain, which is expected to open in 1991 on a block also shared by the Place des Arts theatre complex. And all around her, Wallace finds, is "a really welcoming and supportive community, which will make things easier."

That community is going to get a broad mix of art from the Galerie Brenda Wallace, judging from the inaugural group show in August. In an article on the seven artists represented, Wallace said their preoccupation was "particularly focused on reflecting the multi-faceted historical conventions of art in Western society, as well as with current art systems and mass culture." A tall order, which could encompass everything but the kitchen sink in approach — and did. In terms of media, work spanned everything from film to installations, but there was a clear photographic theme, tied to last September's mammoth Le Mois de la Photo in Montreal that was spread through 70 galleries, stores and public spaces. Artists represented in Wallace's first show included Roberto Pellegrinuzzi (Montreal), Wyn Geleynse (London, Ontario), Marian Penner Bancroft (Vancouver) and Ron Benner, also from London, whose powerful installation on political repression of the Cuban working class in the sugar industry (that culminated in the Bay of Pigs incident) dominated the show. Wallace's next show was devoted to Montreal artist Sylvain Cousineau, while in the new year (March 17 to April 14) she will be presenting painter/photographer Yves Gaucher's first solo exhibition in Montreal in some years.

The question everyone asks is: given her experience everywhere else in Canada, why Montreal? Although she was born and raised there, she left shortly after graduating from the Montreal School of Art and Design in 1952 (where her classmates were Guido Molinari and Paterson Ewen, "although they don't remember that"). She has already found it "a little disappointing that a lot of the artists I'm bringing in here are not well-known in Quebec," and worries that the public won't understand what she is trying to do.

Still, "it just seemed right to me to come back here. It seemed easy and comfortable, less stressful — and a lot less expensive — than opening a gallery in Toronto. I think I can do just as well in Montreal as Toronto.

"Actually, I don't know if that last part is a myth or a reality. But I'm about to find out."

By Stephen Godfrey/Portrait Photography By Marc Drolet

2

▼ Samuel Beckett, *Teleplays* (film still)

Antonio Muntades: The Board Room
December 2, 1989 - December 31, 1989

Dennis Gill: In the Heat of the Moment There is no Reason
December 9, 1989 - January 28, 1990

L'estampe originale: A Portfolio of Nineteenth Century Prints from the Collection of the Booklyn Museum
Organized by the American Federation of Arts
December 16, 1989 - February 12, 1990

Samuel Beckett: Teleplays
December 16, 1989 - February 4, 1990

Robert Houle: Parfleches for the Last Supper/
The Place where God Sits/
Everything you ever wanted to know about Indians from A to Z
February 11, 1989 - May 6, 1990

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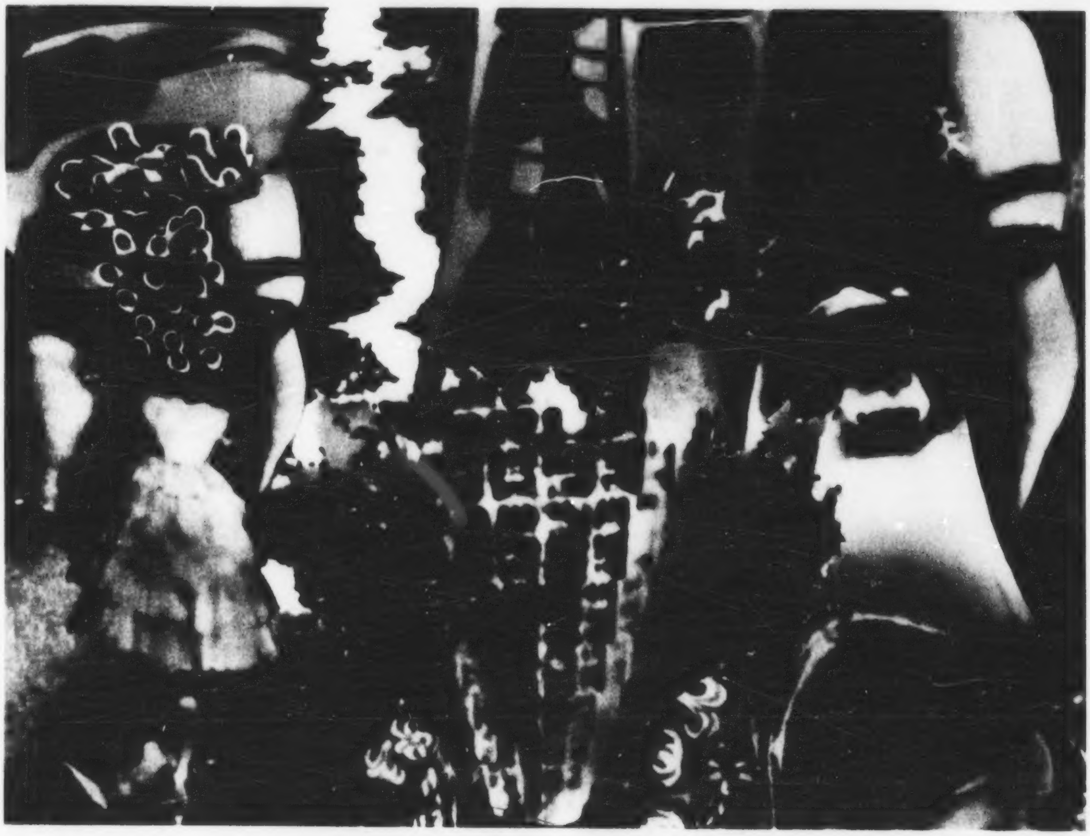
FOCUS

ON *SHELAGH ALEXANDER*



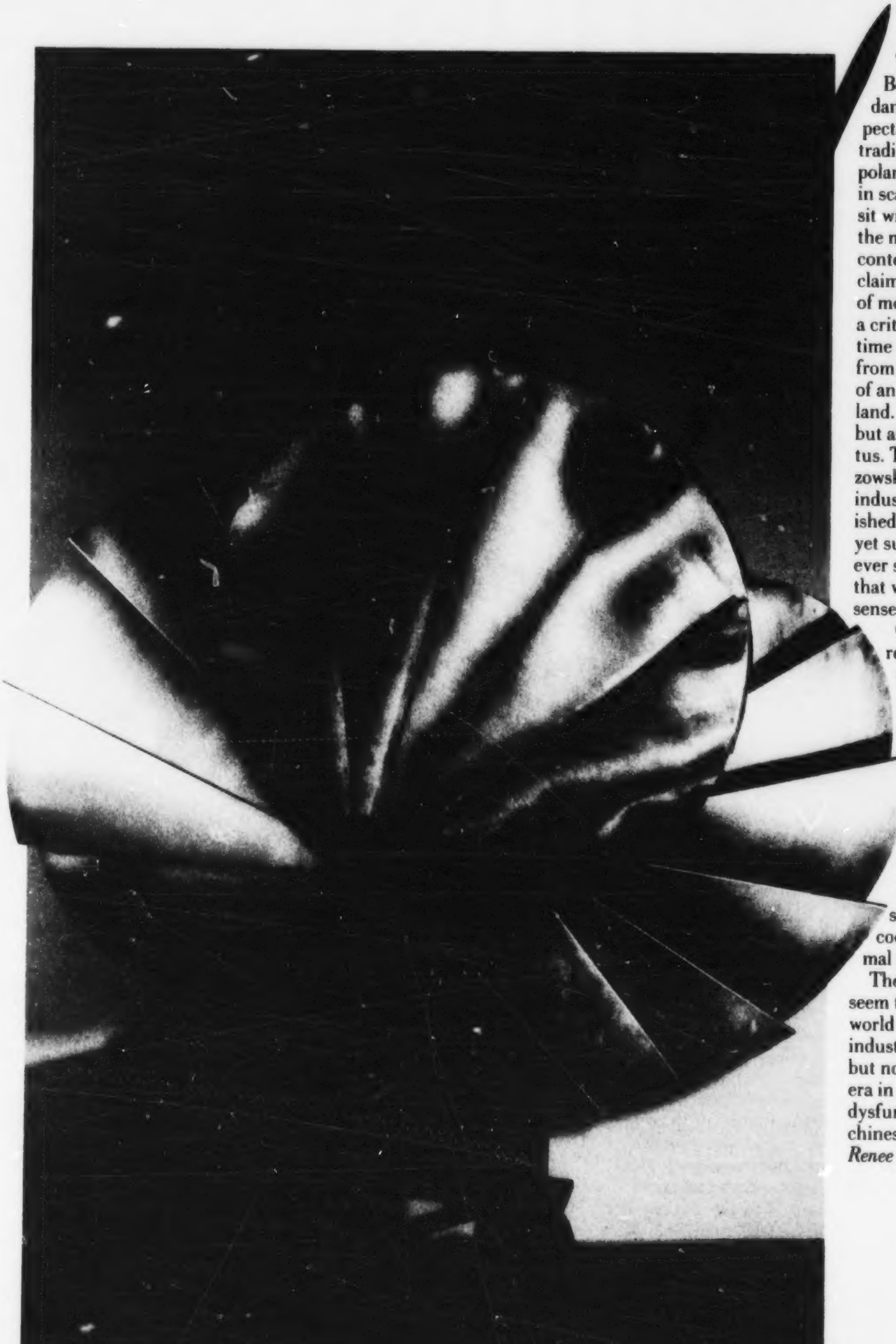
Untitled (V) 1988-89
Black-and-white photomontage
81 x 61 in.

Shelagh Alexander has been producing black-and-white photomontages since 1981. Her work defines a female psyche through the use of film imagery, the juxtaposed images often fragmented, amputated, schizophrenic, floating in a *film noir* of their own. Although Alexander's photomurals resemble collages, they are not the result of a cut-and-paste process; some of the images are contact-printed directly from negatives onto sheets of photographic paper through the use of stencils, others are printed directly or layered using projection. The result is a narrative, a temporal space filled with black and white phantasms — ghosts of imagery, the original meaning of which has been shrouded in shades of grey.

Alexander's early exhibitions, *Three Stories* (1981) and *Hero* (1982), were nightmare-like projections accompanied by text, post-apocalyptic fables with a personal twist that Alexander compiled from private photographs, newswire images, drawings and television. She first started incorporating movie stills, taken from super-8 film clips, into her work with *Untitled*, her first show at the Ydessa Gallery in 1983. Alexander's fascination with movie stills became more specific with a series of photomurals titled *The Somnambulist* (1984) and *Voices of the Unclean* (1986). *The Somnambulist* used manipulated film stills from movies of the 1940s in an attempt to restructure, as Alexander says, "the feminine in *noir*" while *Voices* dealt with imagery from mainstream cinema.

Alexander's most recent exhibition, *Untitled 1988/89*, which showed in London, England, at the Institute of Contemporary Art last spring, was also part of the National Gallery's Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art and is scheduled to travel to Germany in 1990 as part of a group show. The work makes use of film imagery unbracketed by a historical period. It consists of what Alexander refers to as "mysterious moments" — images that exist on the periphery of film language and therefore also on the periphery of our consciousness.
Donna Lypchuk

FOCUS ON *LILIANA BEREZOWSKY*



The work of Liliana Berezowsky slides with mordant wit along an axis of expectation, flaunting its contradictions and the riddle of its polarities. Her sculptures, bold in scale and audacious in style, sit with an edgy aplomb within the modernist white box of the contemporary gallery. They claim a place within a lineage of modern sculpture, but from a critical distance. At the same time they suggest a retrieval from elsewhere, the elsewhere of an urban industrial wasteland. Not as utilitarian objects but as a kind of majestic detritus. Though sculpted by Berezowsky, they evoke "found" industrial objects, newly polished, complete in themselves, yet suggesting part objects, forever severed from the whole that would give a meaning and sense to their existence.

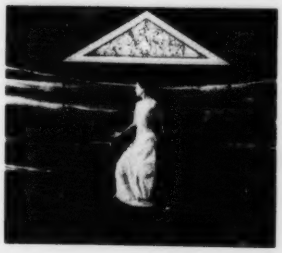
Certain elements are repeated: the prominence of scale, the industrial fabrics of steel and cement, the manufactured shapes of cylinders, stacks, funnels and cones, the sheer materiality of the objects. And certain qualities are repeated: the libidinous vigor, the veil of menace, the sheen of seduction, the cool playfulness, the formal rigor.

These evocative objects seem to take their place in the world as myth-machines for an industrial age, mirroring wryly, but not without sentiment, an era in which old myths are dysfunctional and new machines are quickly obsolete.

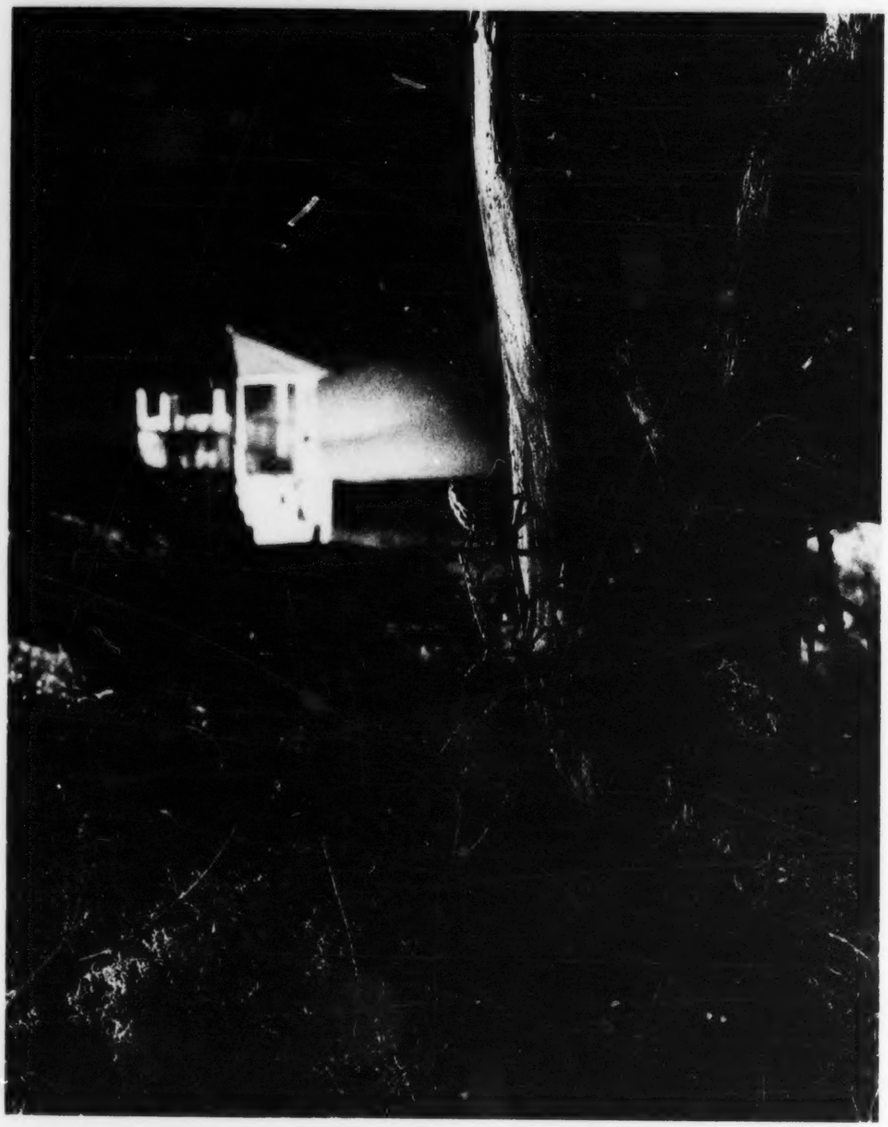
Renee Baert

Boaz **1989**
Steel, stainless steel
92 x 127 x 68 in.

FOCUS ON *HOLLY KING*



Above: *Hellenic Winds* 1982
Black-and-white photograph
42 x 40 in.
Right: *Place of Desire* 1989
Black-and-white photograph
48 x 62 in.

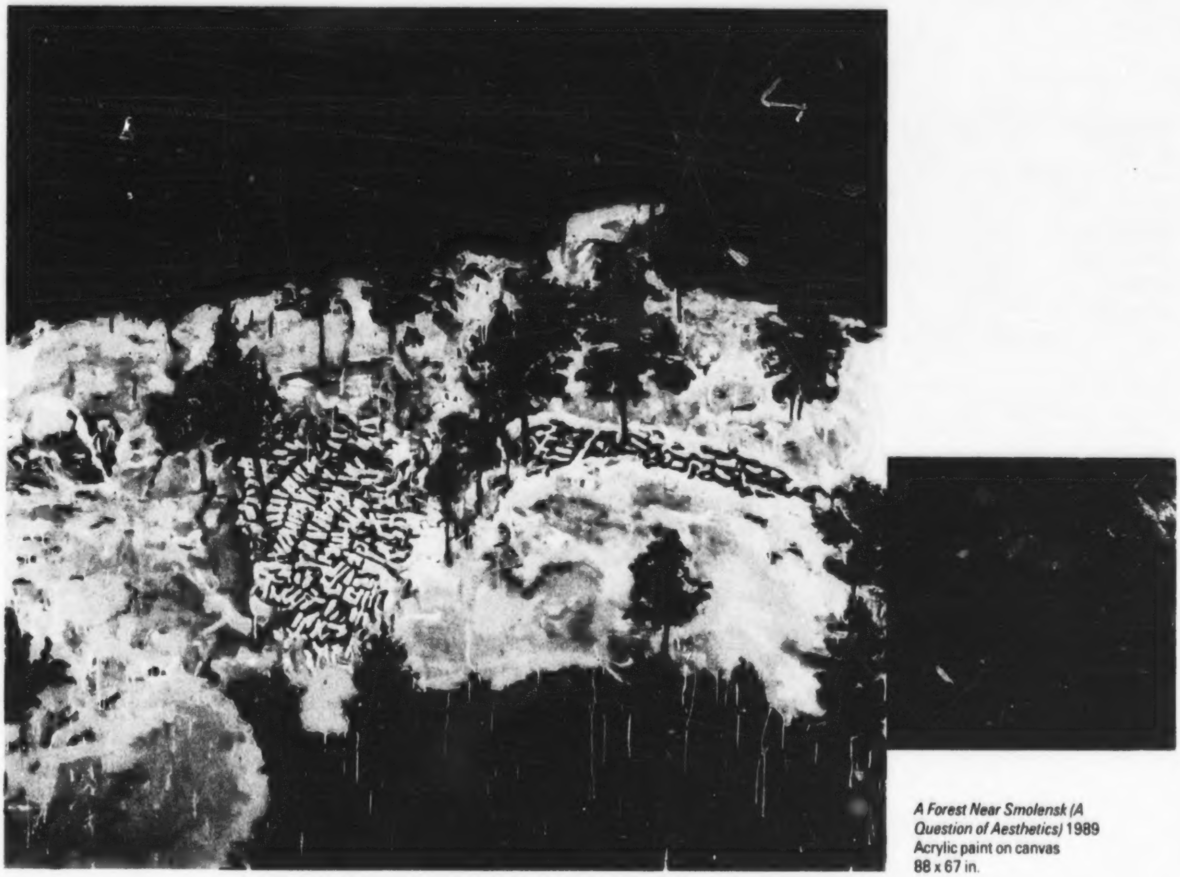


Holly King began as a performance artist whose work centred on the body carrying the theatrical charge by means of codified gestures. With the photographic series *Hellenic Winds* (1982) and *Mysterium Towers* (1983), derived from performances created for the purpose of being documented by the camera, the artist began staging herself in specific settings, that is to say, painted backdrops of familiar historical fragments. She borrowed from myths and legends, using scenic backgrounds, such as Greek temples and medieval castles, chosen for their evocative power. Gradually King shifted her emphasis from the human form in arrested movement to the increasingly important sets and the landscape context in which it was situated.

The thematic exhibition *The Waters* (1985), comprised of large photos and smaller charcoal drawings, reflected and expanded upon the symbolic elements that King had previously introduced. These "waterscapes" (a term coined by the artist) relied heavily on the theatricality of synthetic nocturnal light and photographic distortions achieved through plays of perspective, focus and scale. Reconstructions of nature evoked a potential event and the occurrence of natural phenomena such as tornadoes or geysers embodied the presence of the absent figure. This was particularly apparent in the color landscapes *Effusion II* (1986) and *Fiery Falls* (1987). In many of these images — *Lighthouse with Furies* (1986), for example — the elements played an active, almost tangible role while the human presence was suggested by architectural structures, roads or staircases that acted as viewpoints onto the landscape.

In King's most recent work the images no longer seem to be aspects of a given psychic landscape. Rather, they offer glimpses of autonomous sites, their verticality and depth reminiscent of traditional Chinese landscape painting and their dreamy luminosity of Whistler's nocturnes. In the three-tiered composition *Place of Desire* (1989), for example, the artist has set a gazebo in the middle ground. It is slightly out of focus, attainable only through oneiric paths. The foreground elements such as actual branches, moss, leaves, saprophytes, are in sharp focus and seem to touch the surface of the print, almost as if they are obstacles to an unreachable place or protective cover behind which the viewer can survey the site unnoticed. The large scale of the photograph encompasses the viewer while the props are magnified to incongruous proportions. These tactile elements arranged in the foreground serve to trigger mnemonic associations that entreat the viewer to wander through an imagined landscape of prophetic fictions. *Francine Dagenais*

FOCUS ON *WILLIAM MACDONNELL*



A Forest Near Smolensk (A Question of Aesthetics) 1989
Acrylic paint on canvas
88 x 67 in.

Angels, based on the heavenly attendants in Renaissance nativities and crucifixions, had appeared in the work of William MacDonnell several times before the Calgary painter came across a medieval legend that informed — in exactly the right metaphorical terms — his idea of the angel as witness. The story told of angels who became involved with humankind and were left on earth to watch without being able to act upon events. Consequently, MacDonnell inscribed the names of watcher angels across the dark sentinel trees of a 1989 painting, *In a Forest Near Smolensk (A Question of Aesthetics)*, which commemorates the mass burial of thousands of Polish officers slain by a treacherous Stalin.

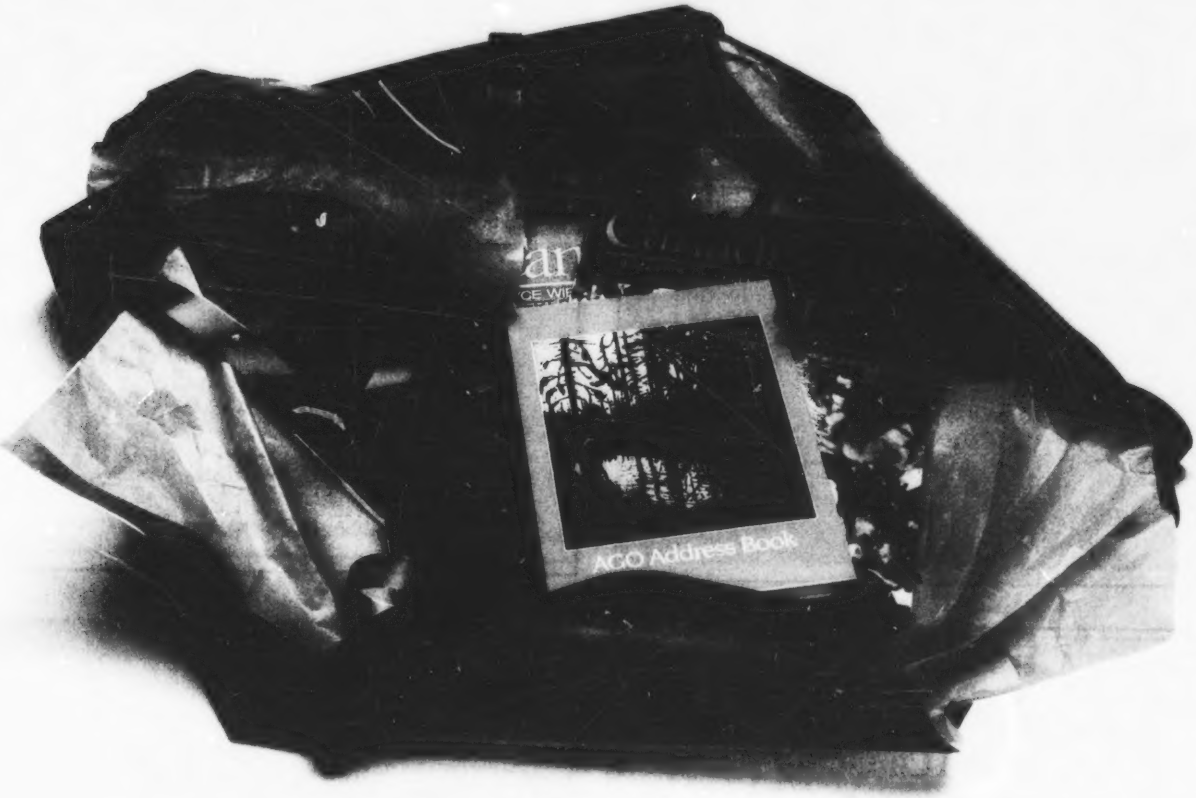
This notion of bearing witness to history is pivotal to the development of MacDonnell's work. Since the mid-1980s, it has linked two ongoing series, *Garden* and *The Romance of Ruins*, and it has led him to other symbols, such as the suitcase of the traveller or tourist, which has appeared recently in both cycles. For MacDonnell, to bear witness is not a passive role but a crucial act of contemplative engagement with the world, a metaphor not only for his position as a painter but also for the act of looking at paintings. As Philip Guston did, MacDonnell finds the most endearing quality of a painting to be its unchangeableness, its testimony fixed in time, its imperviousness to passing human catastrophes.

But if MacDonnell places himself on the side of the angels, it is not to encourage romanticism, Northern, expressionist or otherwise. Fascinated by our continuing need for the romance of ruins and transcendent landscapes, he nonetheless sees romanticism as a lie and searches for a new vocabulary to suit contemporary times. Thus, for the 10 years he has been a painter, MacDonnell has set the style, subject matter and content of his work at purposeful odds. Scarring and embalming the anti-expressionist acrylic surfaces of single canvases and diptychs, he paints and repaints images salted with clues to an ironic view of history.

MacDonnell sees the garden as an ideal space — library, studio, gallery, sacred grove — wherein knowledge is sought and tested. At the root of this concept, however, lies its opposite: the battlefield park wherein the knowledge of horrific events is erased by acres of grass. These contradictions provoke a closer reading of the paintings. Northern landscapes divulge clandestine graves. As angels watch, historic monuments to ideologies — the Reichstag, the American Embassy in Beirut, the King David Hotel — burn or crumble under terrorist bombs. MacDonnell, who professes no political stance in his work, privileges the garden over the bandwagon to study the view at a remove. MacDonnell uses war photography as a source and also visits certain sites. He then synthesizes this information, giving his paintings the aura of a document. However, in the last analysis, he says, a painting is a painting: a question of aesthetics. This he explores again in new work at Paul Kuhn Fine Arts in Calgary, from January 11 to February 3.

Nancy Tousley

THE ART OF GIVING



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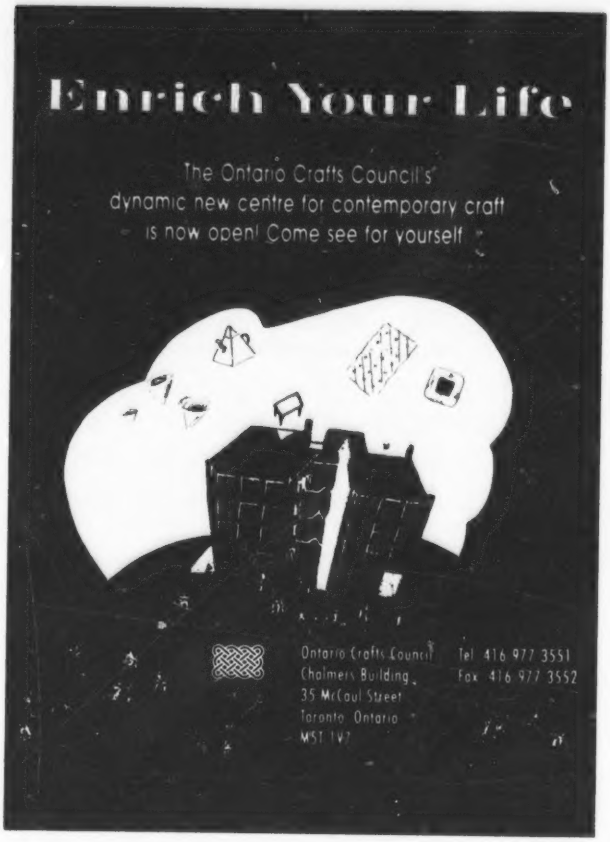

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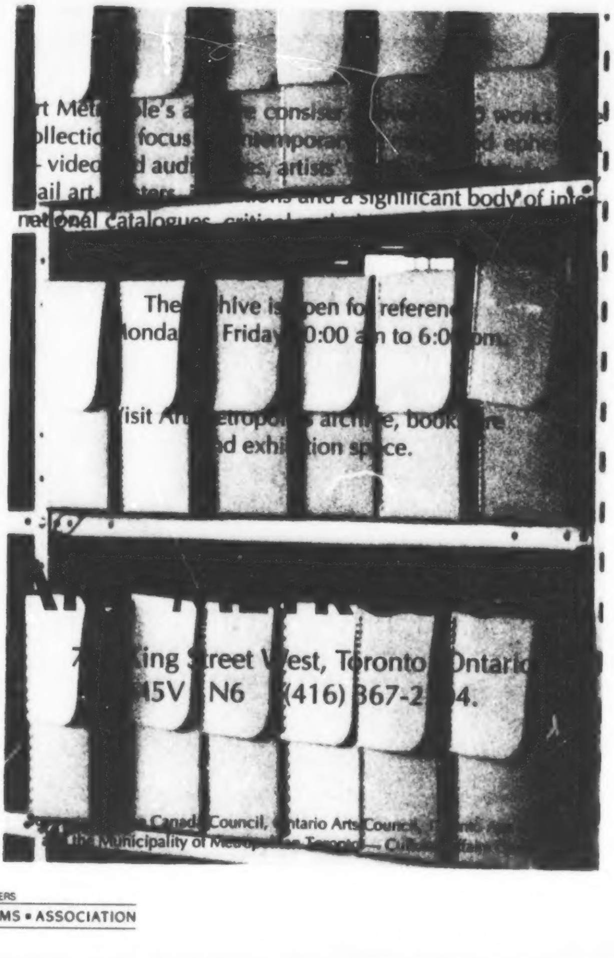

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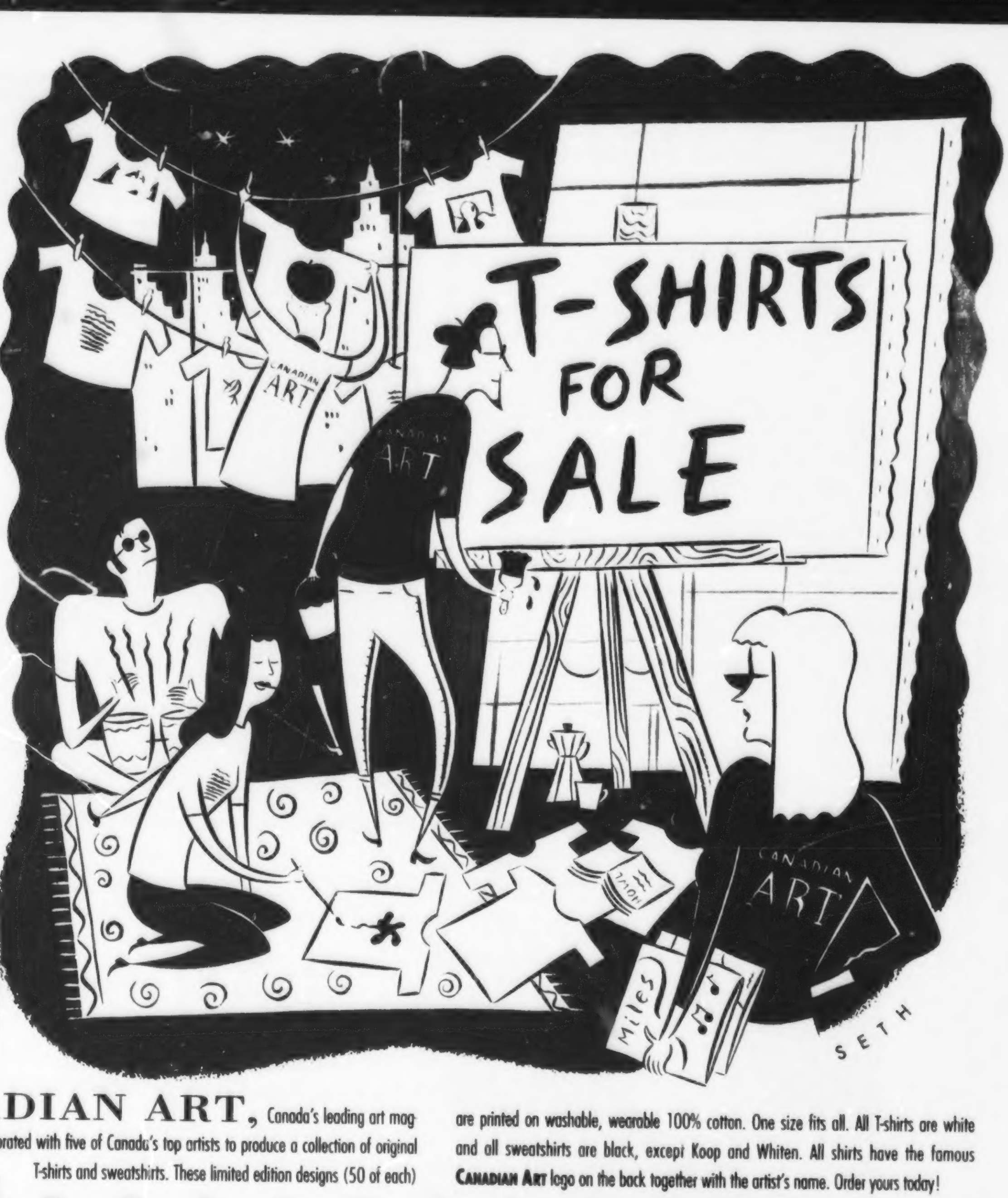

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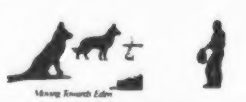

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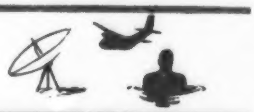

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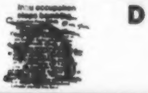

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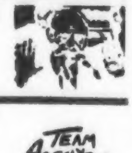

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ERRATUM

Apologies to John Hartman and his dealer Mira Godard for incorrectly identifying his work in the fall issue. The correct title of the piece is *Collins/Yellow* (1989, pastel on paper, 28 ½ x 40 ½ in.).

CLASSIFIEDS

CANADIAN ART CLASSIFIEDS provide a marketplace for your product or service. The cost is $2 per word (abbreviations count as one word). $30 minimum for each ad. Cheque, money order, MasterCard, VISA or American Express must accompany order. Include number, name, address, expiration date and signature. All ads accepted at the discretion of the publisher. Closing date: February 1 for Spring issue.

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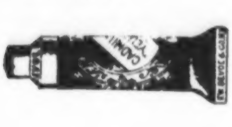

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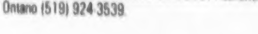

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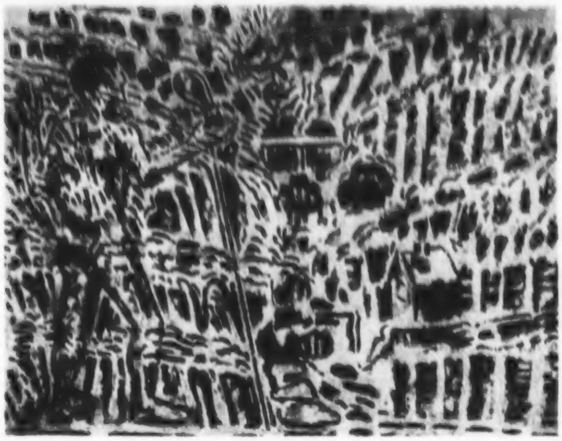
THE PROFESSIONAL ART DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA is pleased to announce the release of a new brochure entitled BENEFITS OF DONATION. A bilingual publication, this informational guide provides an excellent overview of the advantages of donating art works to public institutions, outlines the gifting process and specific tax benefits available to you. We are grateful to the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation in underwriting the cost of this brochure. For more information contact: P.A.D.A.C. 296 Richmond St. West, Suite 502 Toronto, Ontario M5V 1X2 (416) 979-1276.

JOHN CLARK

1943 - 1989



John Clark
Guardian of the Valley 1985
Oil on canvas
91 ½ x 68 ½ in.
Photo: T.E. Moore
Courtesy: Wynick/Tuck Gallery

The painter John Clark died of cancer on September 20, 1989, in Lethbridge, Alberta, at the age of 46. His program as an artist, marked by intelligence, learning and a profound generosity of spirit, was large in its search for meaning. This he found when the physical materials of his craft met the transforming energy of his thinking/feeling painter's hand. The work that now stands for his full, if unfinished, career encompasses more than 20 years' devotion to painting. It also includes every viewer he continues to touch through his medium, the innumerable students he taught in both England and Canada, and a small body of lucid, clear-sighted critical writing on modern and contemporary art.

Linked to the English tradition, to Cézanne, to Hopper and Avery and Hartley and Guston (painters with whom he found a kinship), Clark searched for a means to marry matter and spirit in images that embodied the humanizing qualities he missed in so much recent painting. Of Avery, he wrote: "The painter reminds us that the action of the artist on the painting's surface can be an organic process similar to the action of natural forces." The same is true of Clark. In the same piece, he held to "that older notion of style" as "personal inventiveness." He sought "that much more delicate and ambitious goal of figurative painting...transformation — that necessary metamorphosis of subject-matter that takes place on the specially sensitized space of the painted surface." He once said in an interview with painter Ron Shuebrook, "I want my paintings to be both overtly figurative and overtly abstract if such a thing is possible — not synthesized into an ambiguity." To that end, he turned drawing into painting and painting into drawing, bringing that "language through which all painting is expressed" to the surface so that a viewer, guided by his solid yet transcendent touch, might witness the process that drew an object in the world into another order of being.

A true trans-Atlantic man, well schooled in European art history, Clark, in his painting *The Man With the Hat of Fire* (1981), could savor the wry poignancy of Van Gogh by portraying a figure in a candle-trimmed hat painting a Halifax landscape that includes the Holiday Inn. Born in Yorkshire in 1943, Clark moved back and forth between England and North America several times: to take his M.F.A. as a Fulbright scholar at Indiana University (1968); to lecture at his alma mater, the Hull College of Art in England, where he had lectured from 1968 to 1973 and (following a lecturing stint at Newcastle Polytechnic) 1974 to 1978; to teach at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (1978-83); to become head of the painting department at Hull in 1983. He returned to Canada in 1986 to teach at the University of Lethbridge. North America gave Clark some distance on European traditions and he allied them with new affinities. He was bent upon conserving painting's wholeness and well-being by drawing directly from life, nature and art of the past and reshaping the mixture. "Transformational painting has more in common with the novel and with poetry," he wrote. "Being structured and multi-layered, it acknowledges the world as a reality, not a fantasy, and the artist as an individual with the responsibility and ability to act in its interpretation." *Nancy Tousley*

An exhibition of John Clark's work, shown in the fall at the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, moves to Calgary's Glenbow Museum February 3 to March 25, then to Concordia University in Montreal April 12 to May 19, and possibly on to Toronto and Vancouver this spring. Toronto's Wynick/Tuck gallery will also hold a show, The Night Paintings: A Memorial Exhibition, *from February 10 to March 3.*

Contributions to the John Clark Memorial Scholarship fund may be sent to the Department of Development and Community Relations, University of Lethbridge, 4401 University Dr., Lethbridge, Alta. T1K 3M4.

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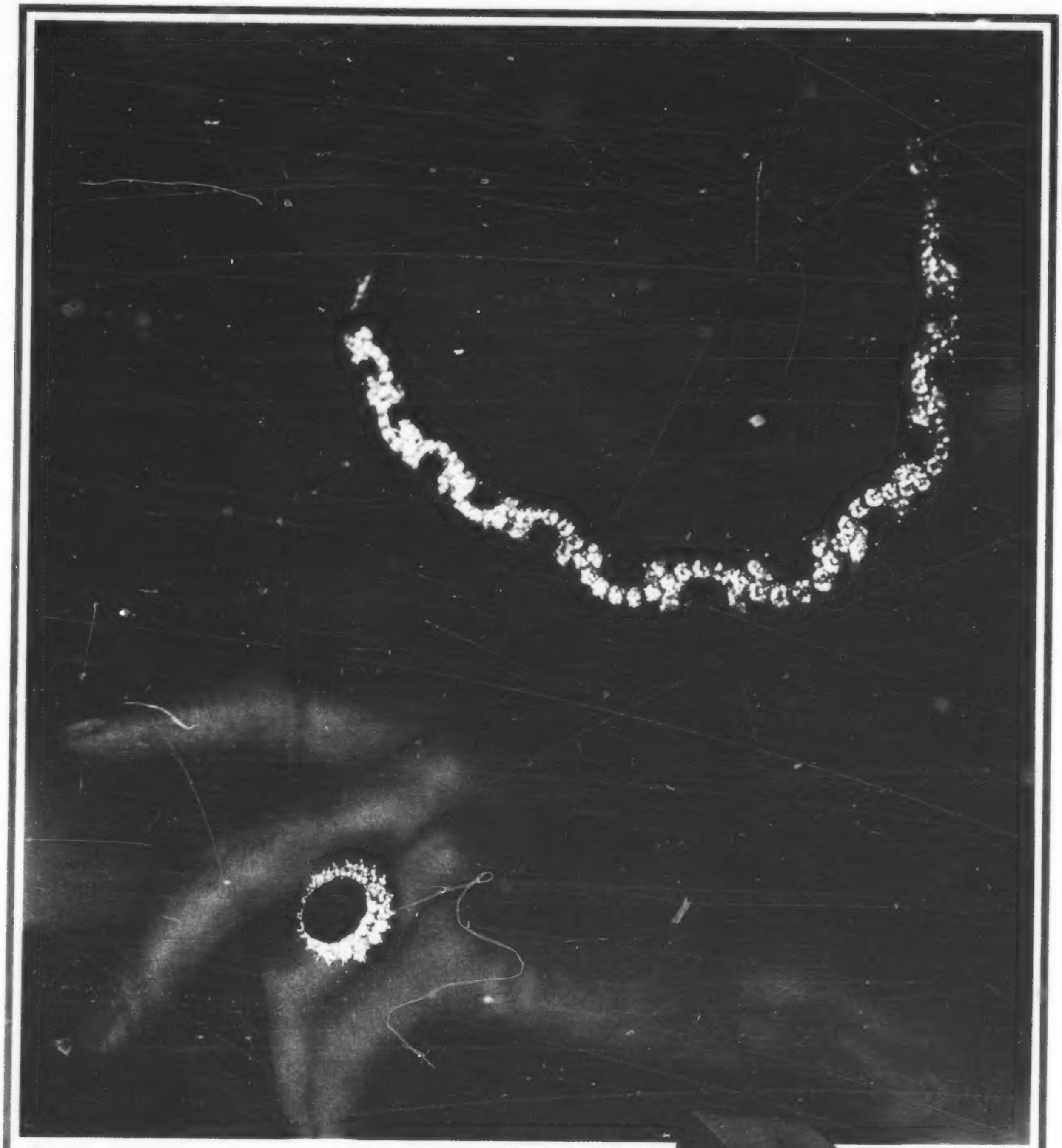

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